

DARK JOHN BROWN.

BY EDGAR WAYNE.

CHAPTER I.

It is quite as untrue as it is ungallant to charge that *all* the mischief in this world is done by the women. We dare say that to maintain the opposite of this false though common position, may set some crabbed and disappointed old bachelors to exclaiming pish! and pshaw! But pish! and pshaw! are not arguments.

There are male gossips, as well as female; and the former are more mischievous than the latter, in the proportion of a vulture to a crow. Your woman gossip is usually inclined to content herself with such small pickings up as a bonnet trimmed awry, a ribbon out of fashion, a few details of housekeeping neglected, or some such minor trifle. Once in a while, it is true, they do go to the length of mysteriously intimating that somebody is no better than she should be; but as nobody better than reasonably good has recently been discovered, it is difficult to decide how much below par one no better than she should be really stands.

But your male gossip flies at more important quarry. His scandal tells. His blows are levelled at more vital and important points; and as he usually talks, or seems to talk of things of more consequence than the other, he receives more attention, and does more injury. Careless curiosity, and senseless chat, offered as an equivalent for chat desired, make up the staple of the female—while your gentleman tale-bearer has more real malice in his heart, and more poison on his tongue. We mean of course those who talk for a purpose—who have a deliberate intention of malice and envy in their hearts, and who labor to accomplish it. Some men, there are, who talk to hear themselves, of the faults of others.

Perhaps a more nefarious character does not exist than one who deliberately injures the reputation of his neighbors to serve his selfish purposes; and who has no idea of building himself up, that is not coupled with the thought of pulling others down. Dark Brown was such an one. He flourished in a village where the men of his patronymic were so many in number that the expedient had been resorted to of giving them each a soubriquet by way of distinguishing them apart, when spoken of. There were Old Brown and Young Brown, Brown on the Hill, and Meadow Brown, Light Brown and Dark Brown—and the latter, not for any love, but for the purpose of illustration of a not-at-all lovable character we have chosen for our hero.

Dark Brown was married, when our sketch takes him up. To go back to his school days, when he managed to secure the hate of all his mates and companions, would occupy too much of our time, and exhaust the reader's patience. Suffice it to say that he managed effectually to implant the persuasion, in the minds of those who were afterward to be his mates

in manhood, that he was a very disagreeable, but a dangerous personage, whom it was necessary to propitiate by seeming friendship, or to avoid crossing at any rate. The latter was hard enough to do; for every other man's good fortune was a cross to him through life; and one needed only to be successful to secure his hatred. He married in such a mode as to ensure to himself a life of suspicion and cold distrust: for he supplanted a rival by artfully villifying him, and his bride took Dark Brown in a fit of resentment against another. She discovered how much she had been imposed upon soon enough to begin hating her husband in very good season; for there is nothing which man or woman cannot more readily forgive than the being made the dupe of a lie. Perhaps his wife was the only person alive who knew him so well as to hate without fearing him; for she felt that in his marriage he had inflicted upon her the worst injury within his power; and having met the worst, she feared nothing further.

Brown was bitterly punished. Sneak as he was, he was not proof against contempt; and the most awful retribution which can, in this world, follow sin, is the knowledge that those who best know the guilty most heartily despise him; and the sense that no course of conduct can remove the true estimate which is thus established. Where even a man's kindness is distrustfully received, as if poison lurked behind his every gift, and where his enmity is taken as a matter of course, and his abuse as something as good as, from its source, could be expected, it is of no use for him to kick against his humiliation, or to try to escape it. It sticks to him like the shirt of Nessus. He may hate all the world the more heartily, the more he is despised, but that does not mend the matter any, but aggravate his sufferings. Even hate loses its zest, when the hater has nobody who can share the sentiment with him; and Dark Brown had withdrawn himself from all companionship with his kind. We mean to say from all real companionship, for there were enough timid souls who had an apparently civil word for him; and he seldom desired to carry a point that it was not conceded, for people feared his enmity. Even this uniform success had at last become a sore, for when one procures civility at such a price it reflects no compliment upon his character, and is anything but balm to his selfishness.

It happened one morning that Brown being nearest the door, answered a knock, and opened it. A boy of some ten or a dozen years, who held a letter in his hand, was the applicant. He asked, "does Mr. Brown live here?" Now as our Brown saw the letter and did not wish to run the risk of getting another man's epistle—his name was John Brown, and their were six other Johns—he asked—

"What Brown?"

And the boy, without thought of harm, and intending to give the most direct and obvious answer, replied—"Dark Brown."

"No!" growled the other, and slammed the door in the lad's face. This was foolish—exceedingly foolish—but a man in an ill-humor cannot be expected to do wise things. To make the matter even more unpleasant, Brown heard a suppressed titter, even before he turned from the door; and when he looked round he found his whole family in a gale of suppressed merriment at his ill-nature. The children thought it an exceedingly good joke that their father should be angry at a name which even they had learned to consider almost as harmless as if it had been given by his sponsors in baptism, instead of that many headed sponsor, the public. Children as they were, they did not consider that, in the application of distinctive titles, the people, as a celebrated politician once said of their second thoughts, are "seldom wrong, and always efficient."

Brown was forced to grin horribly a ghastly smile in pretence of joining in their merriment. He knew too well how little any other course would avail him—for he had been chafed too many times in some similar method. But he asked, "whose boy was that?"

And the answer did not mend the case at all. It proved to be the child of him who would have been Mrs. Brown's husband, but for the mode in which he was set aside as we have already related. And Mrs. Brown in a tone of insinuating softness, proceeded to pour oil into his wound with exquisite adroitness—but it was the oil of pepper, with a dash of cantharides. She remarked how beautiful and well clad a child it was—how well behaved and exemplary—enlarging particularly upon those traits in which he least resembled her own children, and contriving to make the father of her boys almost loathe his own offspring as she proceeded. And she wound up her eulogy with a most malicious climax, in which she made it appear that the father of the lad was the parent to whom he, and his brothers and sisters owed all their excellent qualities; praising him as a pattern father and husband, above all the men she ever knew—present company *not* excepted. In all this torment so artfully applied, she was careful so to conduct her speech that any exhibition of feeling on the part of her husband would have given an application to the censure by implication, which her praises of his opposite conveyed upon the unhappy Mr. Brown. But he could not wholly conceal his vexation—and she triumphed, and could not wholly conceal her triumph. A delightful domestic scene, was it not?

Life is made up of trifles. The little incident, so apparently unimportant as a child's calling John Brown Dark John to his face, opened anew all the rankling hate of his evil heart, and centred it upon one object—the family of Smiths, whose unlucky junior had so unwittingly pulled the beard of Dark Brown at his own threshold. He worked himself into believing that Smith hated him as devoutly as he hated Smith, and that the accident which we have described was a preconcerted insult. Nothing could be further from

the truth; for Smith did not even think of Brown, much less with any enmity. He had long ago forgotten the "cross in love," for he very philosophically reasoned that a woman who could condemn a man capriciously and unheard, would not be likely to make a very affectionate and even tempered wife, let her have who she would to husband. Therefore, when his first vexation was over, he learned to congratulate himself upon his escape, and far from hating Dark John Brown, he pitied him. They had little or no intercourse for obvious reasons.

And now Brown set himself to work, with all his love and capacity for mischief, to discover some method in which he could injure Smith. He did not waste his anger in careless and unguarded speeches, or throw away the artillery of his malice in any way which would serve only to expose the fact of his own enmity, without affecting his victim. By careful and artfully timed innuendoes he injured the credit of the other, and by insidious aspersions, uttered with all the appearance of candor, and of deep regret that he should be obliged to say such things, he managed to throw doubts upon his integrity. Without being able to imagine the cause, Smith in the course of a few months found himself in exceedingly bad odor, and the utmost that he could ascertain of any person's agency in producing this state of the public mind, was that he had repeated what others had said. "They say," that foul ignis fatuus which dances over decaying reputations was never more intangible than in the present instance. Smith had friends—but as he had never been remarkable for good or for ill, he had no very ardent ones, out of his own household. Neither could it be said that (Dark Brown excepted, who kept in the dark) he had any very eager enemies. It was a dead level of indifference that seemed to meet him on every side—a coolness which he could not understand. All his actions seemed suspected, and all his motives misconstrued. A man had much better be stoned to death, than to fall under the ban of village public opinion. In martyrdom there is hope of posthumous justice—in a death of reputation by slander, uncorrected, the utmost victim can hope for is that, if he is not indeed speedily forgotten, the combatants upon the merits of his character will make cudgels of his bones to continue their fight withal.

If the reader thinks that we have drawn a picture too black of Brown's enmity, he must remember that Smith was, at the outset, the injured party; and that a bad man hates no person so intensely as the man whom he is conscious he has once abused. Indeed there is more truth than credit to human nature in the proverb, "he who has injured you never forgives you." Beside all this, Mrs. Brown, who, whether from her natural disposition, or from her unfortunate marriage, was no angel, constantly kept up the mode of irritating her husband, which accident had led her into. It was a glorious vengeance for her, and she was too unscrupulous to care, even if she knew, how much poor Smith suffered in consequence of her chafing her bear of a husband to continual enmity. And to understand why Brown was so successful in his machinations, it need only be explained that he was rich, while Smith was poor.

"THE well laid schemes of mice and men," says the poet, "gang aft a'gley." John Brown fancied, in the pride of his heart—or rather we should say in the pride of his purse, (for the possessor of a heart in his case was not regarded, by those who knew him, as an established fact,) that he was above the danger of want. Pursuing his selfish schemes with a steadiness of covetous grasping which hesitated at no injury to another, spared no falsehood, spoken or acted, and respected nobody's rights when they stood in the way of his desires, he had become that terrible individual in the country, a rich and unscrupulous man. But there was an unsuspected under current of events at work which was to work his downfall.

Everybody remembers the disastrous financial convulsions, in which those who fancied themselves rich, found their coffers full of paper as valueless as the dead leaves into which the magician's money turned, in the Eastern tale. John Brown, not deficient in financial sagacity, and furthermore egged on to suspicion by his distrust of human nature, was nevertheless a sufferer. Men whose movements are complicated and various as an elaborate machine, may, like that machine, be thrown completely out of gear by the failure of a very small and apparently insignificant portion of their plans. "A screw loose" is death to a manœuvring man, while a frank and straightforward one does not need to care for small accidents.

Brown was surprised to find his bank stock going down—down—down, with an alacrity in sinking which defied calculation. Yet he had a careful and unscrupulous adviser in the city—a partner to some extent, to whom he looked for advices, but none came. He thought that there was something under all this which his comrade knew, and that all must eventually come right and satisfactory. But when, despite his faith in his own sagacity, and that of his associate, he found himself, if the stock reports said true, an absolute beggar, he could live on hope no longer, and hastened to the city. There every face told the same gloomy tale, and before he had consulted, or even seen his agent, he was convinced of the disagreeable fact that he was ruined. He burst upon him in his counting-room with—

"A pretty business you have made of it. We are beggars!"

"We!" said the other, coolly, "what do you mean? You may confine your remarks of that sort to yourself, if you please."

"Why, are you not in the United States Bank stock as deep as I?"

"I haven't a dollar of it."

"What, did you sell out without telling me—you scoundrel—you——" and Brown was turned black with rage.

"Easy, my friend, easy, or I shall be obliged to knock you down. I am not in the habit of being talked to in precisely such language as you have used."

Brown sank into a seat unasked—the picture of despair. The other pitied him, and so administered consolation by saying—"I told you, according to agreement, what I was going to do, six months ago.

I wrote, and you never answered—and I knew you was alive, for you wrote me on another subject, carefully avoiding that. So I thought you had found an angle of your own, and meant to keep me out of it. I wrote by Smith, who was here, to be sure that you got the letter."

Brown groaned aloud. He understood all. "I'll kill Smith—I'll ruin him."

"That is done already; and I suspect you know more about it than I do."

"Thank Heaven for so much," said Brown, at length.

"You are in a humor to be devout to-day," said the other sarcastically. "Perhaps you rejoice that Dowlas, Dimity & Co. are gone. They stopped to-day."

"What! I've got——" but habitual caution stopped him. He did not think it safe to tell all his losses.

"I know it," said the other, with a malicious smile. "Will you take five per cent for what you have of their paper?"

Brown made no answer.

"What," said the other, pursuing his relentless questionings, "will you take for what you have on hand of Brown, Burlap & Co?"

"Dollar for dollar. It is payable to-day."

"Payable, but not *receivable*, my dear sir. "Dowlas & Dimity carry them down too."

Brown could sit there no longer. He rushed out into the air. His investigations, pursued in no very enviable mood, but with forced composure, revealed the agreeable fact that Brown & Burlap *did* fail from the stoppage of Dowlas & Dimity. In the counting-house of the latter were assignees, sitting like a corner's inquest. He arrived in season to hear Dimity, the younger partner, say—"if this had only come yesterday, instead of to-day, we need not have stopped."

"You need not have stopped *to-day*, perhaps," said one of the assignees, very calmly, "but you could not have run beyond next week. It is just as well so, my dear sir, depend upon it."

Poor Brown, who had eagerly listened to all this, groaned again. For once, he was really sorry for another's misfortune—because it involved his own. If Dowlas & Dimity had run a week longer, the notes in Brown's possession, which were within a day of maturity, would have been paid, and not only so, but those of Brown, Burlap & Co. would have been saved too. So to Dark Brown the thing was *not* "just as well as it was." One day more of grace would have secured him his venture—one week more the whole. "What is it," said he, "which came just a day too late?"

"Oh, some country merchants money," said the assignee, tossing him the letter. "He is an honorable fellow, if he was compelled to let his note lie over. I have a little of his paper, and intend to offer him an extension. But you seem to know him?"

Brown's under jaw had fallen, as he held the paper in his trembling hands. It was Smith's remittance—Smith's whom he had prevented from getting a discount at the village bank! He had rejoiced the night before in the belief that he had ruined him, and now Smith was safe, respected and solvent, and he, Brown, had fallen in the pit which he had dugged for another.

Dark John Brown hurried back to his home in the country. His wife smiled, but not openly, as she saw the cloud on his face. He threw down his hat, and said to his son—

"Go tell Smith's boy to come over here."

"Ask him, with your father's compliments, if his parents are willing," insinuated Mrs. Brown, blandly. The son soon returned:

"Mr. Smith says if you wish to see any of his family they are all at home."

Brown looked at his riding whip—and then he thought better of it. He went over to his neighbor's house, and found the family just sitting down to tea. The formality of an invitation was passed, and, of course, declined. The family waited for the unusual visitor to open his business.

"I suppose," said Brown, "that you are aware that your son is liable to be sent to the Penitentiary?"

Mrs. Smith uttered an involuntary scream, and the frightened boy retreated behind her.

"Indeed I am not," said Smith, astonished, but with calmness. "What is the matter, sir? You are very much discomposed."

"The young scoundrel has stolen a letter, that's what. And he shall go to Cherry Hill, if there's any justice in the land."

"Perhaps you allude to one which I brought from Philadelphia, and sent over to your house?"

"I don't know anything about *that*. I know and can prove that the letter was given to you, and I never received it. I shall hold you to answer."

"It was my son just now," said Smith, "that you intended to hold."

Brown had crossed his own path. "At any rate," he said, "it was stolen between you. It makes no difference to me whether father or son, or both are hanged."

"Mr. Brown," said Smith, "for some reason or other you have shown me, as I have just learned, the deepest malice. But I have no disposition to bandy words with you. I brought up a letter from town, and sent it to your house. You slammed the door in my boy's face, for a very childish blunder of his, which I regretted at the time, I confess, more than I do now, for you have shown yourself unworthy of any consideration. Thus treated, he pushed it under the door. There is the simple story, as far as we are concerned, and I dare say you had the letter long ago, if the truth could be ascertained."

"Yes," said the lad, plucking up courage, "and I pushed it clear under, with a stick."

"Stuff!" growled Brown.

"I can show you," said the boy, "just where I poked it."

"Oh, nonsense," said Brown, moodily. Nevertheless, as people in a quandary do what seem very senseless things, Mr. Brown, Mr. Smith, and the little Smiths all walked across the road to see where little Josey pushed the letter. And he, full of consequence, picked up another stick, and pushed it under the door to show just how he did it. And Brown would have kicked him as he stooped, only that his father stood by, and was the stronger man of the two. So he satisfied himself with pushing the lad aside, and opened the door, intending to walk in, and shut the others out.

But Smith's eye caught something, which induced him to put up his hand, and stop the door from closing. The stick had run under the edge of the oil-cloth upon the floor, and remained there. Smith jerked up the cloth, with a sudden thought—and there lay, grimed with dust, stained with floor washings, and flattened by the steps of out-goers and in-comers, but still entire enough to preserve its identity, the very letter, the non-receipt of which had ruined Dark John Brown.

It was wonderful, how the tide turned. Brown moved out of town—a wiser, and we hope a better man. The whole of his course toward poor Smith was discussed, and as the persecuted Smith had now a point to start from, he vindicated himself from all the "*they say*," and soon stood fairer than ever before. Indeed, he had little need to speak in his own defence, for the circumstances became so public, and the character of Brown was, now that he was reduced, so notorious, that Smith found people pre-disposed in his favor, on all hands. Everybody remembered that they had always known that Dark Brown was a bad fellow; and many were sure now, that they had always defended Mr. Smith, when he was evil spoken of. As to Mrs. Brown she had the sense to perceive that she had been a very foolish, as well as a wicked woman; and as Brown, despite his lamentations, is not *quite* a beggar, he fares a great deal better than he deserves, with a wife whose penitence for past folly leads her to kindness which affection never did.

Our little tale is told. We trust that we have shown how a man may do mischief with his tongue, as well as a woman. But there is a better moral. As we have quoted one proverb, let us take another—a lesson to all the ill-disposed, and all evil speakers of both sexes: "curses, like chickens, come home to roost." Such, certainly, was the experience of Dark John Brown.

THE RETURN FROM MEXICO

"They return—they return—
They return no more!"

WAR is always terrible! Its depopulated fields, its slaughtered thousands, and its demoralizing tendencies, render it, even in the justest cause, a thing for humanity to weep over.

This nation has just emerged from a contest in which victory has everywhere attended its arms. A part of those who were actively engaged in it, we have just seen returning to their homes, honorably discharged from service. Of these, some bring back the reputation of heroic deeds, such as would not disgrace the brightest page of history. Others arrive, however, disfigured, or maimed for life. But how many have never returned at all!

What a contrast between the return of the living and dead! The one comes back, with brows wreathed with victory, and steps attended by military pomp; but the other is brought home in sadness, in silence, in tears. Each has fought with equal bravery, yet how dissimilar the result! We might record the names of a host who have returned with elevated rank and high military reputations; but what a crowd of the illustrious dead we should have to place in the balance against them. There was Vinton, the accomplished gentleman, the sincere Christian—there was Ringgold, the Bayard of the army—there was Garland, and Twigg, and Graham, and Scott, and a hundred others. But, contenting ourselves with the simple tale of one of those who fell, we shall leave the imagination of our readers to supply the story of the rest.

C— was an only son, and the last male scion of his house. High-spirited, generous, and in all things noble, he was the stay and hope of his surviving parent. At the proper age he was placed in the Academy of West Point, for his ancestors had been soldiers in the Revolution, and his earliest dream of ambition was to make himself worthy of their name. He grew up, in this institution, the pride of his class. Athletic in frame, and vigorous in intellect, he excelled alike in manly exercises as in a scholar's acquirements. He graduated in 18—, and was brevetted a lieutenant.

His command was one that allowed him to be much

at home, and here he met his cousin, an orphan girl, to whom his father had given a home. Amiable, accomplished and beautiful, she unconsciously won his affections, as he did hers, and their mutual love was blessed by the aged parent. The young soldier's cup of happiness was already filled to the brim, when the war with Mexico began, and he was ordered, with his regiment, to the seat of hostilities. He was to have been married in a few months; but now all this was suspended. Still he was full of eager anticipations of the future. Oh! little did he know his fate.

Who shall describe the eagerness with which his betrothed bride, and his gray-haired sire now watched for intelligence from the seat of war? Who shall picture the agony of suspense with which they waited for the lists of killed and dangerously wounded after every general action, or the breathless terror with which they hurried from name to name, fearing every moment to find his. The rejoicing crowd, whose huzzas shook the streets outside, little dreamed of what was going on in that old mansion. Several battles had now occurred, and he was still unharmed, so that, at last, their fears grew less poignant. The war, too, was thought to be nearly over, and they began to speculate on his probable speedy return. Suddenly, with the news of a great victory, came intelligence of his death.

He had fallen, indeed, at the head of his column—but what solace was this to his broken-hearted family! He had died with heroic words upon his lips—but could this reanimate his lifeless clay now? One wild shriek burst from his affianced bride, as she read the awful intelligence, and then she fell fainting to the floor. The emotion of his parent, though less violently exhibited, was not less fearful. The hope of his declining years, the only child of his sainted wife, the last representative of his ancient line, was no more; and, as the thought came over his memory, he groaned in bitterness, and, with Job, wished he had never been born.

They had talked of the return of their young hero—well, he came—but in how different a guise from what they had expected! He came with no prancing

steed, amid the brilliant panoply of war; but borne in his coffin, he entered his father's house for the last time. The sound of the dead march attended him, and not the bold triumphal music they had looked for: and tears, instead of smiles, met him at the threshold.

They laid him in the old wainscotted chamber, the same room where his grandsire, with his sword across him, had lain in state: and crowds poured in from the broad street to gaze on the dead man's face, and see the honorable wound by which he had fallen. But oh! what solace was all this to the crushed hearts that sat desolate in the neighboring apartment.

As evening drew on the crowds departed, and the bereaved were left to weep alone. Then only did

they enter that old hall to indulge their grief. His affianced bride flung herself at the foot of the coffin, which shook under her convulsive sorrow. His sire buried his face, in like manner, at the head. And the soldier's favorite dog cowered by his side, expressing, by that attitude, his grief.

The hour of agony that ensued passes our power to tell. But the mourners had one comfort amid their sorrow—like the lamented Vinton, he, for whom they wept, had died a Christian. This thought, at last, brought consolation, and enabled his sire to say, as he clasped his aged hands, and looked up, with streaming eyes, to heaven,

“The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away—blessed be the name of the Lord!”

KATE LEE'S EXPERIENCE IN FLIRTING.

BY CLARA MORETON.

CHAPTER I.

It was a busy, bustling day at Glenwood, yet a very happy day withal, for the sky was cloudless, and though it was the beginning of September, it was as warm and sunny as in June. All over the village, from Pine Hill to Hazlewood brook, children were running to and fro, bearing bouquets of dahlias, many-colored zelias, and scarlet, white and crimson phlox. These treasures were all deposited in the town-hall, where the young ladies of the village were busily engaged in re-arranging them, and placing them in vases on the long tables that stretched the whole length of the room on either side, and which were already filled to profusion with frosted cakes, wreath-surrounded pyramids, and towers of luscious looking fruit.

Down the centre of the hall, another row of tables extended, and these were tastefully arranged with every imaginable article of needle-work, from the beautifully embroidered ottoman covers, to the plain gingham sun-bonnet of a child. Festoons of ground pine and wild flowers hung from the chandeliers above, and the upper part of the windows and the pillars were wreathed with similar decorations.

Between the two doors which gave ingress and egress to and from the saloon, stood another table, wider, but not more than one fourth as long as the others, and on this dolls of various shapes and sizes—rabbit pin-cushions—barking dogs—noisy cats—humming tops, and toys of all descriptions, lay in loving contiguity. Above, in large letters of ever-green, was traced on a white ground, "Fair of the Benevolent Association." Opposite the Northern entrance door curtains of blue worsted damask, and white muslin, were looped up with tasselled cords on either side, revealing to the thirsty, the cool looking apparatus of a soda-fountain, and piles of plates and spoons awaiting their burdens of iced creams. Adjoining this was a raised platform, hung with wreaths of green, and festooned to the opposite walls on either side.

The snowy muslin of the curtains hung in graceful folds concealing the interior, but in gilt letters on a placard above, the post-office, and the office of the Glenwood Telegraph were designated. The remaining corner of the room was as wild looking a place as one might find in a days' ramble in the pine woods that skirt the Eastern part of the village. The girls could have no credit in planning and arranging that grotto-like place, for the mimic rocks half covered with green moss that formed the arching doorway, was all the work of one pair of hands; and that same pair cut from the forest two nearly half grown pine trees, and had them conveyed, with much difficulty, to be sure, but with final success, to the mimic grotto,

where their towering tops touched the ceiling, and enveloped in deep shade the nook beyond. The seats were moss-covered, with here and there a shelved imbedded, and the walls were hung with forest drapery.

To complete the enchantment of the scene, a sound of dropping water was heard from the darkest corner, and when the pine boughs were parted, the gleaming light fell upon a moss-surrounded basin, where gold fish were sporting. Every one knew that the only gold fish in Glenwood belonged to Dr. Bertwood's son, but there were many who did not know that Harry Bertwood planned and made that gipsy's cave for the veriest little gipsy in all Glenwood. They thought it strange that such a book-worm as he should interest himself so much about the fair; and it certainly was a rather remarkable proceeding; for the year before Harry had called the association a nonsensical affair, and did not even honor the meetings with his presence. There were some among them who remembered that Kate Lee had not then returned from boarding-school, and putting that with the fact that Kate was to be the fortune-teller, and that Harry had shown an uncommon fondness for ladies' society ever since his return from Brooklyn, they ceased to marvel at the time spent upon the grotto, and only wondered if Kate would treat him as indifferently as she had all her other admirers.

The day was fast wearing away, when Miss Bellamy, the president of the association, announced that all arrangements for the evening were finished, and those present were requested to retire from the hall, and prepare themselves for their evening's duty. Miss Bellamy then crossed over to the fortune-teller's cave where Kate Lee was standing, half hidden by a large bunch of the pine tree, and arranging some of the smaller boughs.

"Well, Katrine," said she, as she approached, "have you already commenced your divinings, or are you breathing some wierd spell to consecrate your grotto?"

"Neither one nor the other, Mag, but I am half regretting my acceptance of the part allotted to me; for I understand we are to have a fine band of music to promenade by, and here I shall be confined to my den, while you will be skipping from one part of the saloon to the other; but it is too late for regrets, so come along, Maggie, or we shall be locked in—Mr. Bertwood, my bonnet, if you please."

Again the pine boughs parted, and a young man of noble bearing stood in their presence. His hair hung in masses of short, waving curls about a forehead white as the purest marble. The strong intellect that dwelt within gleamed from the dark grey eyes, while the large aquiline nose, and haughty curve of the

mouth, relieved the face from that effeminacy of expression which the masses of curls and delicacy of complexion might otherwise have given it. His hands and feet were small almost to a fault, but were perfect in their contour, and his whole bearing was that of a gentleman as he stepped from the shade, and with mock gravity bowed to the surprised Miss Bellamy.

"Why, Harry, is that you?" she said, "we have missed you for the last half hour—but see, they are threatening to lock us in."

"Yes, and it is quite time that the doors were closed, for it wants but an hour of our re-assembling," replied Harry; then turning to Kate, he said in a lower tone—

"Your leghorn, Miss Lee, I am sorry to say, has dropped into the water, and as it was owing to my carelessness, how shall I atone for it?"

"My poor, unfortunate bonnet! Oh, it is too provoking; but it must be dried immediately, for I must have it to wear to-night."

Harry bent his head, passed under the arch, and soon returned with a very rueful countenance, bearing in one hand the mutilated leghorn, which plainly showed that it had not only been dropped in, but had been taking a course of hydropathics.

"Oh, my bonnet is ruined—garland and all—and I should not care so much, but there is not another leghorn in the whole village large enough for me to wear—so you see, Margaret, I can't be gipsy to-night."

"You must, Kate, bonnet or no bonnet—there is no one to take your place; but I am sure it was very careless in you to hang it over the water."

"It was my carelessness, Miss Margaret," interrupted Bertwood.

"Well, if I was Kate, I would not speak to you once during the evening," replied Miss Bellamy.

"I am subject to her majesty's orders," said Harry, bending one knee, and proffering the dripping leghorn, "but I sincerely hope my punishment will not be so severe."

Catharine took her dripping leghorn, and holding it at arm's length, passed down the hall, followed by her companions. They parted at the entrance, and Kate hurried across the park through the shaded yard into the house, and then went directly up the staircase to her room. There, upon the bed, was laid out her dress for the evening, and as she cast her eyes upon the ruined bonnet, she exclaimed—"oh, had it not been for his provoking carelessness, my dress would have been complete," then raising her voice as she stepped back to the stairs, she cried, "Julia, come here this moment." The sound of quick footsteps was heard on the stairs, and along the passage way, and a good looking mulatto girl entered the room.

"Why, Miss Catharine, when did you come in? Mr. Travers has come. He came in the afternoon stage—and oh, he is such a handsome man—your mother talked a long while with him—and he brought a letter from Miss Emma: and I found this box in the entry after he had gone—wont you open it?—it has some handsome present in it, I'll be bound."

"I wish Mr. Travers and his presents were both

where they came from," said Kate Lee, pettishly, pushing the band-box away from her with her slippered foot. Julia's lips moved, but there came no audible sound. She evidently thought that if her mistress could resist Mr. Travers' attractions, she never would love, and a look of mingled disappointment and reaction settled upon her face. She hastened to arrange Catharine's glossy curls, and turning around for the dress of velvet, which lay beside them on the bed, she espied the ruined leghorn.

"Oh! Miss Catharine, your bonnet—your beautiful bonnet!—how did you get it so wet?"

"Why, Jule, it was through the greatest piece of carelessness I ever heard of. Harry Bertwood hung it over the water, and it dropped in, and must have soaked half an hour or more; but never mind; it can't be helped now—you are lacing that gaiter rather too tight, Jule; there, that will do; now, bring me my bod-dice."

The last fastenings of the boddice and sleeves were arranged, and as Kate Lee stood before her mirror, and saw the reflection of her beautiful form and face, and noted how very becoming was the dress she wore, a smile lit up her fine features, and her large, dark eyes flashed with unwonted excitement.

"You look beautifully, Miss Catharine, and I wish Mr. Travers could see you now. I am sure he would teach that awkward Mr. Bertwood to know his place, yes, and to keep it too," and Jule smiled cunningly, as she marked the flush which spread over her young mistress' face.

Kate Lee made no reply, but a smile played around her rose-bud mouth, dimpling either cheek. Bounding down the staircase into the drawing-room, she stood before her mother.

"Come, mother, let me tell your fortune—give me your hand."

"No, Catharine, darling, save your eloquence for this evening! Did Julia tell you that Mr. Travers had been here?"

"Yes, and I wonder what should have possessed him to have come just at this time of all others. I'll run up and see what there is in the box, for Julia said he brought a box and letter from cousin Emma."

A few moments more, and Kate glided into the room again with a beautiful chip bonnet placed saucily upon her head, and knotted under her pretty chin with cherry ribbon. A delicate wreath of velvet ivy leaves, and small clusters of scarlet berries were wreathed around the crown; and Mrs. Lee, as she looked at her daughter, thought she had never seen her half so beautiful before.

"This is just the thing, mother, is it not?" she said. "It was just what I was wishing for the day we first spoke of having a grotto, and a fortune-teller, and oh! it was so kind of Emma to send it—I wonder how she ever thought of it. I declare, I shall be just as glad again to see Frank Travers, for this beautiful bonnet has quite put me in conceit of him and myself too."

Again Catharine's eyes wandered to the mirror, and the blush that mantled her face as her eyes met the fair reflection, was as purely beautiful as the rosy hue of a sunset cloud.

"I will run along now, mother," she continued,

"and if Mr. Travers should stop again, tell him he will be sure to find me at the gipsy's cave." Then kissing her mother affectionately, she passed out.

CHAPTER II.

The large town hall was brilliantly and beautifully illuminated. Never at any previous fair had one half the taste been displayed. Sounds of music from the concealed orchestra filled the rooms with gushing melody, and fair young creatures in dresses of snowy muslin, glided about, presiding sylphs of the fairy-like scene.

Group after group passed in, and Kate watched eagerly for Travers' coming. She remembered his fine stately figure; and a sensation of vanity stole through her heart, as she thought of his having left the fascinations of a city life to pay her a visit. The pleasure she should experience in having so faultless a figure for an escort during the evening, gratified her not a little. Impatiently she looked again toward the doorway, and saw Harry Bertwood making his way through the now crowded hall toward her.

"Now for my revenge," she thought.

"Why, Miss Catharine, you are most certainly a witch, as well as a gipsy—else how have you converted your ruined leghorn into a chip hat so very becoming?" he said, as he approached her.

"Well, Mr. Bertwood," said she, in tones of mock gravity, "if you are my father confessor, I must go back and give you its whole history, as far as I know it."

"By no means, Miss Lee," he replied, the blood mounting to his temples—"I did not intend to be too curious, but it was really such a very great change—you must excuse me."

"Certainly I will, but don't lose all your curiosity so soon, for a proper degree of it is always commendable. Now, I shall set you down for not having a very inquiring mind, if you become satisfied without hearing more."

"Well, then, I am all curiosity—pray tell me more," and Harry Bertwood became deeply interested in marking figures on the sanded floor with the toe of his small boot.

"You have heard me speak of Mr. Travers, a city friend of mine—have you not?"

"Yes," was his only reply, as he worked more diligently than ever at his mathematical problems.

"Well," she continued, "he came from New York quite unexpectedly to me this afternoon, and I have not seen him yet to thank him for so kindly bringing me such a perfect specimen of taste and beauty; but I am expecting him here every moment, and I am so impatient I can hardly await his coming."

Harry did not raise his head; and Kate, provoked that he showed no signs of jealousy, continued, "I believe that I once told you that he was self-conceited, but I begin to think that it was nothing but self-possession, for since I have returned from school I have seen so much awkwardness amongst country gentlemen that I am heartily sick of it."

Still Harry was silent, but as he raised his eyes there was a quiet smile in them which Kate did not

like. At this moment several persons gathered around to have their fortunes told, and though Kate Lee's heart was throbbing wildly beneath the velvet bodice, she rattled on as rapidly as though no storm cloud had overshadowed her spirit. Laughing and jesting the gay group passed on, and Catharine lifted the wreathing vines and went into her grotto.

"And this is the evening I have anticipated so long," she mentally said—"the evening which I have never dreamed could bring me other than happiness—and now that I have found that he loves me not, what is all this music—all these mirthful sounds but mockery? I, who was so sure of his love, and thought to try and trifle with it! I to have been thus cruelly mistaken! Well, I deserve it all. Was I not trying to deceive and mislead him about Travers? Ah! his past attentions have sprung from another source than love."

Kate's meditations were interrupted here, for a tall form darkened the entrance, and, rising to her feet, she met the extended hand of Travers. They passed out together, she leaning on his arm, and after chatting awhile with him, she resumed her place at her table, which Harry had made for her out of gnarled and knotted sticks from the forest.

"My fortune, now, if you please," said Travers, following her, "and to persuade you to give me a good one; let me first cross your hand with gold," so saying, he crossed a small gold piece twice over Katrine's tiny palm, and then dropped it into the richly embroidered wallet which hung at her side. Kate Lee took the proffered hand, gazing wistfully for a moment: then raising her eyes to his with a steady gaze, in a clear, unfaltering voice she repeated—

"Ambition is thy idol!" "Yet press on!
For it shall make you mighty among men;
And from the eyrie of your eagle thought,
Ye shall look down on monarchs. Oh, press on!
For the high ones and powerful shall come
To do you reverence: and the beautiful
Will know the purer language of your brow,
And read it like a talisman of love!
Press on! for it is God-like to unloose
The spirit, and forget yourself in thought;
Bending a pinion for the deeper sky,
And, in the very fetters of your flesh,
Mating with the pure essences of Heaven!"

As she finished, tears sprang to her eyes, for it was a piece she had committed to memory to repeat to Bertwood when he should come to her for his fortune; and as she looked into the unexpressive face before her, and saw how little the beautiful lines were appreciated, her heart yearned for one more smile from the intellectual countenance in whose light she had lived for the past few weeks. At that moment Harry Bertwood stepped forward.

"It is my turn, is it not?" he said, placing his coin upon the table.

Kate Lee raised her eyes—the same quiet smile met hers which had so annoyed her before. Like a flash of lightning through her heart passed the thought—"he has seen my weakness, and he glories in it."

All the pride of her nature arose at the thought, but with a strong effort she conquered her embarrassment, and gazing into his hand without taking it, she said slowly and impressively—

"I seal thee with a seal, I sign thee with a sign, No woman's love shall rest on thee, no woman's heart be thine."

A laugh arose from the merry idlers round about, as Harry Bertwood, with an impatient gesture, raised his hand quickly from the table, and went forth from their midst.

The evening hours wore away. Kate seemed merrier of the merry, and though at times a shadow flitted over her sunny face as her dark eyes wandered from one end of the hall to the other, without finding the object of her thoughts—still no one dreamed that the waters of her heart were more than usually troubled. At a late hour she again crossed the park, this time leaning on Travers' arm.

"It was very kind of you," she said, "to take the trouble of the package from Emma."

"Oh, no trouble at all; but a great pleasure, I can assure you," he replied.

"I hardly know what I should have done without it; but it took so large a box, I should never have thought of troubling a gentleman with it; for I believe you all have a horrible aversion to band-boxes. Why I once had a friend, quite a beau, and a perfect gentleman withal, who upon offering to wait upon a lady home from a tableaux party, she produced a huge band-box, and he stood as if he had just been taken with a cataleptic fit—rolling up his eyes first at her, and then at the box—after a while he suggested that a dray or a porter should be sent for, and she acquiescing, he gave a satisfactory 'humph,' and they trudged off together—he looking very much victimized, and we nearly killing ourselves with laughter. I have never seen a band-box from that day to this without feeling an almost irresistible desire to try the gullantry of some gentleman with it, though never yet having the courage; but jesting apart, you really deserve a great many thanks for your trouble."

"Surely there is some mistake, Miss Lee—I have had no band-box, I can assure you, under my charge. Your cousin Emma gave me a letter, but said nothing about the box—if she had, I am afraid I should have rolled up my eyes as far as your cataleptic friend's, for I have always thought baggage a bore—and a lady's band-box the most detestable thing in creation."

"Really, Mr. Travers, you are quite plain spoken; but very sensible withal, I think; although you cannot guess how much surprise I feel at finding that I am not indebted to you for bringing it. How could it have got here?"

"That is more than I can imagine, Miss Lee; but you made such an admirable little fortune-teller, you ought to be able to divine."

Kate made no reply; she was lost in thought; and when she reached the piazza she drew her arm impatiently, almost rudely out of Travers, and threw herself into a garden chair. Travers drew a seat near her, and looking earnestly in her face, said—

"I trust I have not offended you, Miss Lee—I sincerely hope I have not been so unfortunate."

"Oh! no, you have done nothing, Mr. Travers; but I am vexed with myself, and I have a foolish way of showing in my countenance when my heart is ill at rest."

"And may I not share your heart troubles, Catharine—I have flattered myself that you are not entirely indifferent to me; and it is for this reason that I have lingered by your side. Give me but one faint hope that you will love me, Catharine; and it shall be my life long study to make you happy."

Travers spoke earnestly, but respectfully; and there was a depth of tenderness in his voice which Kate Lee had never heard before. The flower-perfumed air; the moonbeams trembling through the vines, and falling fitfully upon their faces; the quiet beauty of the scene before them seemed to make it a fit time for the interchange of vows, and as Kate listened to the low pleading voice, and her eyes fell upon the really handsome face of her suitor, her heart throbbed with new emotions—emotions of gratified pride and vanity, which fell as balm upon her wounded and mortified spirit. But her reply was calm and effortless, and as the words fell upon Travers' practised ears, he felt that as yet he had awakened no heart emotions in Catharine's bosom. Again he plead long and earnestly, and when they parted a diamond ring glistened in the moonbeams upon the betrothed finger of Kate's snowy hand.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Kate Lee went to her sleeping chamber, she found the lamp burning dimly upon the dressing-bureau; and Julia, wearied with watching, fast asleep upon the floor. For a moment she stood in front of the mirror, gazing intently at her own reflection. She had thought to have found her face crimsoned with excitement, but it was pallid as the petals of the pure jasmine flower, whose odorous breath filled her chamber with perfume. She cast her eyes downward, and they fell upon the diamond, shooting back with renewed brilliancy the feeble rays of the lamp. The events of the past evening seemed as a dream to her—Harry Bertwood's mocking smile—her foolish coquetry with Travers—his impassioned words of love—her reluctantly, half yielded promise, all pressed with a heavy weight upon her heart; and poor Kate sank upon the floor sobbing grievously, and deeply lamenting her own folly and weakness.

In the calm stillness of the night she looked back upon the scenes of the evening in surprise. How needlessly had she, in a few short hours, destroyed her own happiness forever. "No, I will be happy yet," she said, as these thoughts passed in review through her mind. "Betrothed to a man that I neither respect nor love!" she exclaimed, and drawing the ring which had pressed with such a hateful weight upon her tiny finger, she dashed it upon the floor. "What blind infatuation possessed me to listen to words of love from him?" she murmured, "when my whole heart—my whole being is another's, and that other so unlike! What matter if he does not love me? so long as I am my own I can dream of him, and pray for him in innocence, and——" she paused, the sound of a foot upon the gravel walk below fell upon her ear, and almost immediately a folded paper attached to a small bouquet fell through the open window at her feet.

"It is from Travers," she thought, and she made no movement to take it. Then again sounded the entreating tones of his musical voice, pleading for one word of hope, one smile of encouragement, and the memory of her boarding-school days, which he had pictured to her as years of hope deferred to his worshipping heart—when he had gazed upon her as a pure, bright star at a distance—hoarding up all the wealth of his affections to pour them out unceasingly before her, and her heart reproached her with anticipations of the dreariness and disappointment he would feel when she should take back the promise which she had partly made. With a half resolve to sacrifice her own happiness for his sake, she stretched out her hand and raised the bouquet. The bay leaf breathing of "deathless change," was wreathed with the "despairing" cypress and the "faithful" cedar, and from their midst a bunch of scarlet geraniums whispered in voiceless words to Catharine's heart of "disappointed hopes." With a trembling hand she unsealed the note, for she well knew that this was not the language of Travers' hoping spirit.

She read aloud.

"Catharine, when you open this I shall be far from here, and shall not be pained with the sight of the uncaring smiles which a knowledge of my unhappiness will awaken upon your face. Yes, I firmly believe that you, in all your heartlessness, will jest at my love, even as you have already jested with my feelings; and though I bitterly lament the mistaken idea which I had formed of your character, I have not power to crush the buds of hope which for the past few weeks I have woven with my being. Time and absence alone can cause them to droop and wither, and till then I shall remain an alien to my home, a wanderer upon the face of the earth.

Farewell,

HARRY.

Kate Lee set as one stupefied after reading the letter. Hours passed before she moved or stirred. With a knowledge of his love her throbbing heart became so calm and tranquil, that she pressed her little hand upon it to see if its pulsations were still continued. She kissed the note again and again, and looked earnestly amongst the leaves of the wreathed flowers, as if she waited for another message from their midst. The reaction from utter hopelessness and misery to boundless hope and happiness was so great, that it drove from her mind all memory of other causes of regret, and her partial engagement was as a thing which had never been. Even the announcement of Harry's absence made little or no impression upon her mind; but the one thought of his love filled it with a dreamy forgetfulness; and clasping the letter close to her heart, she threw herself upon the bed, without even unloosening the fastening of her velvet bodice; and murmuring his name at intervals she slept.

Julia, the colored maid, rose carefully from the matted floor, and taking her slippers from her feet, stole noiselessly to the side of the couch.

"Ah, I will be happy yet," repeated Catharine in her sleep, as she turned restlessly. Julia nodded significantly, and her eyes gleamed as she saw the paper which had fallen from her young mistress' hands.

"I was crossed in my love for your whims, and you shall be as happy as I have been," she muttered,

as she crossed the room to the bureau where the lamp was still faintly burning. With a pin she raised the wick—scraped off the thick substance which had collected about it, and, shading it with one hand, proceeded to look for the ring.

The glittering stone soon revealed its hiding-place beside the richly carved post of the massive mahogany bedstead, and a smile shot across the countenance of the mulatto girl, as holding it close with one hand she sat down the lamp, and lifted the bouquet which had fallen from Kate's lap to the floor. Then dropping the window curtains and blowing out the lamp, she took her slippers and stealthily left the room. Down the staircase and through the wide hall she passed to the back door, and gently undoing the fastenings, stepped out into the fresh morning air. The moon had long since gone down, but day was just breaking in the Eastern Heavens, and the wily servant girl wrapped her woollen shawl more closely about her, and with a quick step threaded a little path through the green fields. She spoke but once in her hurried walk, and then with flashing eyes and up-raised hand, she said—

"I have not wasted my time in vain—I knew it would come at last."

She approached the river, and as she passed along through the shade of the willows that skirted the bank she paused for a moment, for streaming from the lattices of a large white dwelling that stood within a grove just beyond her path, the light fell upon a pile of baggage beside the open door.

"It is as I thought—he waits the early morning coach," she said, then turning her eyes to the ground, she stood for a few moments in the attitude of one in a deep study, occasionally biting her lips as if some of her thoughts thwarted her in her plans.

At length everything was evidently arranged to her satisfaction, for crushing the delicate geraniums between her fingers, she passed in and stood beside the open door. She had just raised her hand to the knocker when Harry Bertwood, equipped in travelling cap and cloak, came through the hall and stood beside her. A gleam of hope shot across his pale face as he recognized Julia, who spoke hurriedly.

"It is you, Master Harry, that I want—Miss Catharine sent me with a message, will you come with me to the gate 'till I give it you?"

"Did she send me no note, Julia?"

"No, sir; but she sent back yours, and the crushed flowers here which she stamped beneath her feet." There was not sufficient light to show the look of agony which settled on young Bertwood's noble features, but he reached out his hand and clasping the flowers close, pressed them nervously to his face.

"Oh, be a man, Master Harry," said the deceitful girl, as she saw his agony.

"And is this all?" said Bertwood, in a hollow tone.

"Yes, all; only she bade me tell you that she is engaged to Mr. Travers, and that you might believe me, she sent the diamond ring which he gave her last evening."

"Enough—enough," replied Harry Bertwood, as he pushed the hand holding the ring from him—"enough to drive me mad."

The horn of the approaching stage-coach sounded. Julia crept away to the shade of the willows, watching until she saw the baggage fastened on, and the affectionate adieu between Harry and his parents. As she heard the crack of the stage-driver's whip she turned and rapidly retraced her steps to Mr. Lee's dwelling. Noiselessly she entered the room she had left scarce an hour before, and replaced the ring by the side of the bed-post. The grey light of morning glimmered through the muslin folds of the embroidered curtains; and Julia, whose custom had been to draw the lattices together that the light might not disturb her young mistress, now parted the curtains on either side, and then took her place upon the floor again. She laid quietly a few moments, and then, finding that her mistress still slept soundly, she purposely pushed her foot against a chair and overturned it. Kate started at the noise, sat upright, pressed both hands across her eyes, as if striving to recall some half remembered dream, and then with a cry of joy bounded to her feet. But in vain she looked for the note—for the flowers—there was no trace, not even a crushed leaf to convince her that it had been reality. The open window, the withdrawn curtains, the lamp upon the bureau, and even the diamond ring upon the floor, everything was just as she had left it. Could it have been a dream? She looked toward Julia, who was apparently sleeping soundly, with one arm thrown over her head. Again she commenced her fruitless search, and finding no clue to unravel the mystery, she threw herself upon the couch, saying—"I know it was no dream."

"Did you speak to me, Miss Catharine," said Julia, rising to her feet, and then looking with apparent astonishment from her mistress' gipsy dress to her own wearing apparel, she continued, "oh, Miss Catharine, why didn't you wake me up to undress you—how could you let me sleep so soundly—what would your father say if he knew it? Oh, dear! it is too bad, and you look so pale and tired too, and your eyes are swollen as if you'd been a crying all night."

"I was up late, Julia, and when I lay down I fell asleep without intending to; but make haste, and take these foolish things off, and bring me a clean wrapper—and, Julia, don't say anything about my sleeping in these things all night, and with the window wide open, for I know it would worry father and mother, and that is unnecessary."

"Oh, certainly, Miss Catharine," and Julia hastened to remove the dress with a smile upon her lips which she could not disguise. She then brought out of a closet a white muslin wrapper, and laying it across the bed, proceeded to brush and re-curl the long, dark tresses which hung in dishevelled masses upon Catharine's snowy neck.

"No, Julia, braid them, and put them up plain," interrupted her mistress, "and take away that white wrapper, and bring me the pink lawn, for I am pale this morning."

Julia obeyed, and when the breakfast bell rang Kate Lee descended to the drawing-room, looking far more beautiful in her simple loveliness than in her brilliant dress of the evening before; for there was a serene, a subdued look resting upon her

features, which had never before found its home there.

When Mr. Travers called Kate received him alone.

"I regret, Mr. Travers," she said, "that the thoughtlessness of last evening requires the painful explanation which I feel obliged to give in justice to you as well as myself."

Kate paused for a moment, for the warm blood so mantled her face that she was painfully embarrassed. Travers waited patiently, but an expression of anger settled upon his face as Kate continued—

"I received your attentions last evening from motives unworthy a place in my heart, and which I feel ashamed to confess." Again her voice was tremulous with emotion, and her small lips quivered nervously. It was but for a moment. With a strong effort she subdued the pride which was almost choking her, and proceeded—"out of revenge from an imagined carelessness on the part of one—one to whom I have ever been partial, I devoted my conversation to you while my mind was entirely upon that one, and as his apparent indifference convinced me that he did not love me, I listened to you when I ought not to—but I thank God that I found out my feelings soon enough to prevent me from wrecking my own happiness forever, and I return the ring which I so unwillingly allowed you to place upon my finger last night, hoping that you will forgive me if I have seemed to trifle with your feelings, for believe me, I shall suffer enough with the memory of my weakness constantly before me."

As Kate ceased speaking, Travers arose and walked the room hastily.

Very different was the expression of his countenance from the look of agony which passed over Harry Bertwood's face, when Julia delivered her false message.

It was more a vexed look—a look of chagrin—a look wherein the heart had no part; but Kate saw it not, for the long lashes of her snowy lids were drooping low upon her pale face, and with her hands clasped nervously together she sat motionless, bearing the humiliation which her thoughtless conduct of the evening before had brought upon her. Those few hours of anxiety of mind had wrought a great change in Kate's countenance as well as in her heart; and when Travers turned toward her and noted the subdued loveliness of her expression, he stood for a moment as if spell bound. Then seating himself beside her, he again plead with all the eloquence of which he was master, but in vain—the words would have made as much impression upon a marble statue as upon her, but she listened patiently and replied calmly, and Travers left her after exhausting all his powers, fully convinced that there was one heart in the world proof against his many charms.

Then Kate hastened to her room, fastened the door, and upon her bended knees thanked God that the heavy burden which had so weighed her down the night before had been removed from her spirit. Her eyes were filled with tears when she arose—tears for the pain which she had been obliged to cause another, and her bosom heaved with the heart-swells she could not suppress. As she passed along to the window seat, her eyes fell upon the unopened letter which

Travers had brought her from her cousin Emma the day before, and wondering at her forgetfulness where one she loved so well was concerned, she hastily seized it and broke the seal. It ran as follows:—

"DEAR KATRINE—I have news for you. Grand-papa's will has been found, and you and myself are the sole heiresses, fifty thousand dollars a piece. Isn't that nice, dear coz—and won't we flit to our hearts content, and bring ever so many falcons down? Oh, I have such a charming deal to tell you, but you will be with us soon, for papa is writing to-day to uncle Will, to tell him that he must come immediately and have the estate settled, and of course he will bring the heiress with him. Don't let Travers make too much love to the fifty thousand, but I need not tell you to beware, for you will know that with all his beauty he is the most selfish, self-conceited man in creation, and this I remember you know as well as myself. Adieu, dearest, and believe me ever

Your affectionate cousin,

EMMA LEE."

As Kate finished reading another weight was taken from her spirit, for here, clear as the noon-day light, she found the evidence of Travers' sudden and *disinterested* affection. She hastened to her father's library, and placed the letter before him. He drew his daughter affectionately toward him and kissed her tenderly, and then with a quick eye scanned the contents of the letter.

"Hum—hum—you had enough without it, Kate," he said, "and now this giddy cousin is giving you nice notions. Stand up a moment till I see how much higher you carry your head, for I thought it was high enough before."

"No higher, believe me, dear father, and I do not even wish to go to New York with you, and I hate flirtations, and I—"

"Well, well, my little prude, what now?—it will be necessary for you to go to New York, and I suppose you can do that without flirting—can't you?"

"Oh, yes, but must I indeed go, papa?"

"Why, yes, child, and haven't you been saying ever since you come from school that you wanted to pay your cousin Emma a visit, and coaxing me to let you go?"

"Oh, I forgot that," said Kate, blushing, as with a very embarrassed air she escaped from the room.

CHAPTER IV.

It was the evening before Kate's departure for New York. Struggling with a heart sickness which she had never before known, poor Kate Lee leaned listlessly beside her open casement, and the tears which fell from her fringed lids were welling from a fountain disturbed from its purity, and embittered by her own thoughtlessness. Deeply had she suffered for that one evening of levity, for days had flitted away and brought her no tidings of Harry.

A quick step upon the matted floor—the rustling of a dress, and Margaret Bellamy stood beside her.

"So you are going to New York to-morrow, I hear," said Miss Bellamy, "and this is why you look so sad—is it not?"

"Yes, I'm going to-morrow, and I do feel sad; but I can scarcely tell you why."

"Perhaps it is because you are going to meet Harry

Bertwood so soon," said Miss Bellamy, with a mischievous glance at Kate's flushing cheeks, and her large, dark eyes which were raised in astonishment. "Meet him—how so?"

"Oh, you are very innocent, I see: as innocent as if there had been no engagement to meet at New York," replied Miss Bellamy, looking wondrous wise.

"You are talking enigmas to me, Margaret—but is Harry really there?"

"First reply to my question seriously and in good faith," answered Miss Bellamy, "and then I will tell you all about it. Now confess, was there not an understanding between yourselves to meet there?"

"No, indeed, Margaret—Harry did not even tell me he was going to New York."

"Well, then, he is there; his mother says he left home intending to travel, but they got a letter from him yesterday, saying that his uncle was so anxious to have him remain with him and study law, that he had finally concluded to do so. And his mother says he went off so suddenly—wasn't it queer, Kate?"

"Yes, very," she replied, with an absent air.

"And the day before," continued Miss Bellamy, "he received a band-box by the stage, his mother says, and she doesn't even know what was in it."

Kate started; a flood of crimson deluged her face; and her blue-veined temples throbbed painfully.

Merrily flew the talkative Miss Bellamy from one topic to another; but Kate's heart ached so desperately that she could not listen, and very much to her relief Miss Margaret at length took her departure.

Though the many incidents of the fair had crowded thick and fast upon Kate's mind, yet she had never ceased for a moment to wonder from what source had come her beautiful chip bonnet. Now the mystery was solved. It was a gift from Harry, who had heard her say how very much she wished she could procure one; and he had sent it anonymously that she might feel no delicacy in accepting it; and perhaps for the same reason he had purposely let her old leg-horn fall into the water, so that if she should have any suspicions from what source the bonnet had come, she would still be justified in wearing the new one. Then as all this flashed through her mind, with it came the memory of her reply to his query, and with cheeks burning with shame at the thought of her answer, she threw herself upon the bed and wept long and bitterly.

"He thinks me deceitful, coquettish and vain, and I am neither," she sobbed. Then as she reviewed her conduct that eventful evening, she acknowledged how much cause he had to think so, and with a sigh of regret that she had been so untrue to herself, she arose, and dashing the gleaming tears from her eyes, she continued the preparations for her departure with more energy than she had before shown.

There was a time, and that too in days not long past, when the villages of the dear old Bay State were not linked as now with the mighty commercial metropolis of America—when steam-cars and gunpowder were associated in the minds of many as equal causes of destruction. It was in those days that the lumbering stage-coaches wheeled along over the smooth turnpike road.

Kate Lee and her father were within a few miles

New York, when the driver stopped for the last time to change horses.

"We have a new pair for you to-day, Dick," said the ostler, leading out two noble-looking bays with erect heads and prancing feet—"they ran away yesterday with Mr. Travers, and broke his light rock-away, but they'll have more weight to draw with your heavy team, and wont be in such a hurry to smash that, I guess."

"Ah, them's the kind for me," said the driver, and cracking his whip merrily, he proceeded to fasten them in as leaders.

"Coach ready," said the ostler, opening the bar-room door, and a gentleman, followed by two pointers and a greyhound, stepped out into the porch, ordered his guns and game-bag to be placed on top of the stage, and then sprang inside.

It was Travers. Mr. Lee met him cordially; but Kate's bow was chilling. A few moments afterward she drew her veil over her face, shrouding it from his earnest gaze, and enveloping herself in the warm folds of her thick shawl, she sank back against the cushions with the air of one who forbids any further intrusion. The bays dashed swiftly over the road, obedient to every motion of the rein, and at dusk drew up in front of a hotel, from which they were to take a carriage to Col. Lee's mansion.

Travers first stepped out, and gave his arm to Catharine to lean upon as she descended the steps. With a light pressure she placed one hand upon it, but turned to extricate her dress, which had caught in some portion of the seat.

At this instant a fire-cracker, thrown by some mischievous boy, exploded directly beneath the horses' feet, and with a furious plunge they darted madly forward. Travers caught Kate in his arms and placed her unhurt upon the pavement.

"My father! save my father!" she screamed, but the danger was already past, for the horses in their first plunge had overturned the coach and breaking the harness, dashed on by themselves regardless of the hooting of the boys and the screaming of the fruit vendors. Mr. Lee was taken from the stage with one shoulder severely bruised, and his thigh fractured. He was immediately conveyed to his brother's house in Waverly Place, and Mr. Travers followed to ascertain the extent of his injuries.

The next morning the following paragraph appeared in the Herald.

"Last evening as the Glenwood stage was stopping in front of the Broadway House, some rascally boys threw fire-crackers under the horses' feet. They immediately plunged forward, and with difficulty a niece of Col. Lee, of this city, was rescued from the coach. Her father was not taken out until after it was overturned. He was seriously injured. Mr. Lee was formerly a resident of Alabama, and the well-known senator from that state. We hope his injuries will not prove fatal. Our reporter understood that the young lady (who is very beautiful) was rescued from a situation of much peril by a gentleman of this city, who had accompanied her from Glenwood, and to whom she is betrothed."

As poor Harry Bertwood's eyes glanced over the morning paper and rested upon this item, he felt a strange throbbing of the heart at the thought that one

he had loved so well had been in such imminent danger; but it was quickly followed by a thrill of agony that another beside himself should have saved her.

He laid down the paper with the determination of caring naught for one who had proved so unworthy, and with a forced smile upon his lips, and a worm gnawing at his heart, he drew up a chair beside the glowing grate in his uncle's library, and commenced his morning's studies. But the pages of Blackstone and Coke were coned in vain. Then came the memory of dimpled smiles, of blushes, of half averted glances which he had woven into the delicate tissue of hope—then the sudden and rude awaking of his cherished dream—the insulting message of the morning, all flitted before him, and with a brow crimsoned with the memory of his mortification, he dashed the volumes upon the floor, and passed through the hall into the open air.

Weeks passed. Mr. Lee convalesced rapidly, but Kate's close confinement faded the roses from her cheek; and her heart troubles overshadowed her face, for she had waited in vain for some message—some word from Harry. Not a breath—not even a glimpse of his form rewarded her.

One evening, about four weeks from the occurrence of the accident, Kate was sitting in their room with her parents, for Mrs. Lee had come to the city immediately after hearing of her husband's injury, when her cousin Emma danced into the room, saying—

"Come now, Miss Kate, there's no use hiding from me—the tickets are bought—everything is arranged—and Howard and myself are determined you shall go."

"What now, Emma?" interrupted her uncle.

"Why, its the first night of the opera this season, and all my fashionable friends are going, and I want Kate to go with her pale face as a sort of foil beside my roses," replied the giddy Emma, leaning her face caressingly beside the transparent cheek of her lovely cousin. "And then beside," she rattled on, "I think her style will be particularly taking to the few who like sentimental-looking young ladies. Such magnificent black eyes! such a brow of purity! and then I can band that rich, dark hair so gloriously over the pearl round ear. Come, Kate, I've flattered you enough to get you in a coaxable humor—now, won't you go?—if you don't say yes, I'll begin again."

"Pray, don't, Emma, you've said enough to frighten mother already—see how she is looking at me now. Come, go and dress. I will be down as soon as you, although your hair is already so tastefully and skillfully arranged."

Kate Lee looped up her hair, simply fastening it with silver leaves, and wrapping a scarlet crape shawl over her muslin dress, she stood beside her haughty and beautiful cousin—the pure lily beside the queenly rose.

It was late when they entered the opera-house, and though near the conclusion of the first act, the piece was not of sufficient interest to keep the glasses in all parts of the house from the box where the two cousins were arranging their seats. Whispered exclamations of "superb!" "lovely!" "beautiful!" were heard on all sides, and Emma's eyes sparkled with mischief and fun, while Kate's exquisitely chiselled lips curved with a sorrowful smile.

The first act over—the curtain dropped, and amidst the busy hum of voices Kate's ear caught a familiar tone. She looked around. Close beside her, and in a box diagonal to the one she was in, and to which her back had been previously turned, she saw a group of strange faces, the loveliest of them all a fair young creature with rich golden curls, and large, blue eyes, which made her think of Heaven. Her delicately gloved hand rested upon the arm of one whose face was turned from Kate's, but well she knew every wave of the mass of brown hair which hung about the nobly shaped head! She saw the glorious blue eyes turned up with a pleading expression, and distinctly she heard Harry—her Harry answer—

"Well, Ida, to please you I will consent to wait till then; but the wedding must not be delayed longer; for you know—" here his voice became inaudible as he bent nearer, and the face of the beautiful being he had called Ida was covered with a soft, glowing blush, even to the very brow which the golden hair shaded so lovingly. Kate sighed. "Ah," she mentally ejaculated, "I do not wonder that he has forgotten me for her." The music—the piece—all was lost sight of, and Kate Lee sat motionless, pressing one hand beneath her shawl upon her heart, while again she felt that heavy, crushing weight which had so stupefied her the night of her short, but bitter experience in coquetry.

"See, brother Howard, how intently cousin Kate is entering into the plot of the play—I have not seen her with such a brilliant color for many a day," whispered Emma. And Kate did indeed seem enrapt with the scene before her. Her neck arched forward; her gleaming eyes; her parted lips, knotted with emotion; and the deep, intense glow upon either cheek, contrasting strongly with the purity of the marble brow and faultless chin. The play drew near a close. The color was fast dying away upon Catharine's cheeks: the lights and figures danced to and fro and whirled mazily together: she made one motion to her cousin, and fell back insensible in her arms. Howard lifted her up, and with the assistance of Travers, who immediately stepped out of a side box, they bore her through the lobby to the carriage waiting at the door. As they passed the box where Harry and his companions were seated, the one whom Harry had addressed as Ida caught his arm, saying—

"Look, Harry—look, there is a most beautiful creature pallid as death—she has fainted, Harry—run with my salts—quick—quick," and Ida put a richly cut and gilded vinaigrette into Harry's hands. He did not catch a glimpse of the face until he reached the carriage. Travers had stepped in first, and now held her in his arms. As Harry stood beside them, and saw whose was the beautiful face, he started back in surprise—then seeing the agitation of Emma, who had lost all presence of mind, he proffered the salts. It was eagerly taken, but Emma's hands trembled so violently she could not hold it, and Harry took it from her and knelt beside Kate himself.

Her eyes slowly opened and rested first upon Travers. With a quick shudder she attempted to spring from him, but she was too weak, and fell back with her eyes fixed upon the one kneeling beside her.

Stretching out her arms she murmured, "oh! take me from him, Harry—take me from him."

"I will, darling," he whispered, as he arose and bent over her, "I will, oh, how joyfully," he murmured in a lower tone, and he lifted her and pillowed her head upon his shoulder, while with a quick gesture of impatience she motioned to Travers to leave. The carriage whirled onward, and Harry only yielded up his burden at the doors of Col. Lee's mansion. As he rapidly retraced his steps, he murmured, "can it be that she has discovered too late that Travers' love is not as deep as mine." He stifled the thoughts and hurried onward.

CHAPTER V.

KATE was very feverish upon her return home, and her parents immediately, in alarm, sent for a physician. "Her pulse was weak and irregular," he said, "but attributed that to the faint, and thought the faint probably caused by the heat and close air of the opera-house." The minds of her parents were greatly relieved when he left, but the month passed away, and she still continued in the same low nervous state, and the physician, not knowing that the disease was in the mind, found all his remedies fruitless.

It was the first week in January. Kate, pillowed in an easy chair, was sitting beside her mother, who was looking over the morning's paper. Suddenly she exclaimed, "well, I never! I always thought it strange that young Bertwood left our village so suddenly, but here it's all explained."

"What now, mother?" said Kate, in a tremulous voice.

Mrs. Lee replaced her spectacles which in her astonishment had fallen from their place, and commenced reading, "married on the evening of the third instant, by the Right Rev. Bishop —, H. Bertwood, Esq., to Ida, youngest daughter of Horace Abbot."

Kate uttered a low cry, and clasping her arms about her mother's neck, sobbed like a child.

"What is the matter, darling?—what is the matter, child? I was afraid you had been sitting up too long," said Mrs. Lee, as she helped her daughter to the couch.

At this moment Emma came into the room. "Kate," she said, "there is a gentleman in the parlor—the same one who helped you the evening you fainted—perhaps he has come for the vinaigrette, shall I carry it down and tell him you are ill?"

Kate started—"yes—no—wait, I will go myself."

"Why, Kate, are you crazy?" interrupted her mother.

"No, mother, but there is one thing I must and will know—if it was a dream, well and good, if not, I will know what has changed him," and Kate stood up firmly and without trembling in front of the Psyche glass, and threaded her pale fingers through the long, dark tresses, winding them into curls, and looping them up with a gleaming arrow.

"Catharine Lee, you are beside yourself," said her mother, sternly; "have you really loved that Bertwood?—if so, have more respect than to let him know it, now he is married—don't disgrace yourself, my child, I beg of you."

"Never fear, mother," rejoined Kate, "never fear

for me—see, I am strong and well again,” and she arranged the folds of her dress and swept out of the room with the same firm step which had characterized her before her illness. She entered the parlors coldly and haughtily. There was no lovelight in her eyes—no misty dew upon the lashes to whisper of the wealth of love which Kate had hoarded in her bosom for the manly form before her, and with an air as distant as her own he rose from his seat, saying—

“I had hardly expected to see you, Miss Lee, having heard you were indisposed. I have called to see if your parents had any message for me to take to Glenwood—I go there to-morrow.”

“Ah,” thought Kate, “he goes with his bride to show his parents how fair a being calls him husband,” but though it passed through her mind like a lightning’s flash, she could not keep her voice from trembling as she answered, “no, I know you did not call to see me, but I was determined to know whether I had deceived myself with regard to a note which I have supposed you had written to me—did you ever throw one into my window attached to a bouquet?”

“Did I?—why ask me such a cruel question, Catharine, when you returned the note to me with such an insulting message?”

“I returned the note, Harry!—never—never as I hope for the happiness hereafter which has been denied me here—day and night have I looked for it since—but I forget—it is too late now—oh, Harry, did you really love Ida?”

“Love Ida!—my cousin’s wife—I have never loved any one but you, dearest; and is it possible that you did not send Julia to me with the note?”

Kate was too happy to reply, and when soon afterward Mrs. Lee came into the room and found her leaning on Harry’s shoulder, his arm pressed round her waist, she stood a perfect tableau of indignation and astonishment.

Kate gave her mother no opportunity to speak, but immediately rising, said—

“Mother, Harry is not married—it was his cousin Hector, and at Ida’s urgent solicitation he waited to be groomsman—oh! mother, I am so happy.”

Mrs. Lee smiled at Kate’s earnestness, and, turning to Harry, said—

“I find we have been employing the wrong physician; but I think even you will be obliged to prescribe rest and quiet, for Kate’s cheeks have a very feverish glow.”

“I never was better in my life,” interrupted Kate, “but come and sit beside us, until I tell you what a deceitful part Julia has acted toward me.” Kate then repeated the message which Julia had given Harry the morning of his departure, and added, “what do you suppose, mother, could have made Julia so ungrateful, for I have always treated her kindly, and you know it was at my urgent request that father brought her North with us.”

“Ah, Catharine,” replied Mrs. Lee, “I remember it well; and it may be for that very reason that she has acted thus, for she did not want to come North, but preferred remaining in slavery because she wanted to be married to a slave on my brother’s plantation; but I thought more of gratifying your wishes than hers.”

“Oh, that must have been very hard for poor Jule,” said Kate, “I did not dream that she was revenging herself for one of my childish whims—well, now that I find it was Julia instead of Harry that did not love me, I can better bear it; and poor Jule shall be sent back with money enough to buy her lover, and they shall be all the happier for their separation.”

“Even as we are,” whispered Harry.

I have not room to tell of Kate’s rapid recovery—of Emma’s delight at the prospective marriage—of the strong attachment formed between Kate and her supposed rival Ida—nor of the reproaches of Julia’s conscience when she received from Kate’s hands a sufficient sum to purchase her lover from bondage—all these, and a thousand things beside I must skip over, and sketch a scene in Glenwood for you several years from the period of which I have been writing.

That beautiful and airy cottage with its gothic front and verandah sides, is the summer-house of Harry Bertwood and his devoted and loving Kate. The little path that winds through the shrubbery and clasp- ing vines on the right, terminates at the door of a little dwelling far back by the orchard. In a neat front room—on the matted floor—sits a mulatto woman, holding a little girl two or three years old in her arms, while a little boy of five summers at least is by her side, begging earnestly for a story.

“Oh, nurse, tell me just one—or else I’ll go and tease mother,” said the little fellow. At this moment a shadow darkened the window, and the little one in the nurse’s lap clapped her hands merrily, and sprang forward to meet her mother at the open door.

“Ah, Julia,” said Mrs. Bertwood, “you keep these children here always, I believe—how can you have so much patience with their noise?”

Tears sprang to the eyes of the woman as she answered, “how much more patience did you have with me—forgiving me for nearly separating you forever from one you loved—giving me the means of taking my husband from slavery, and building this comfortable home for us—oh! my dear, young mistress, I can never repay you for one half the kindness which you have shown me, but God will reward you—I am sure he will,” and she kissed the extended hand respectfully and fervently.

Kate’s pleasant cottage is in sight of her father’s more spacious dwelling, and only separated from it by a garden blooming with choice roses, and ornamented with vine-covered trellices and arbors, which it is the especial province of Julia’s husband to keep in order.

The last visit which Emma Lee made her cousin, she entrusted her with a secret, which is now a secret no longer; for this week Emma Lee laid aside her visiting cards for a new pack engraved with the name of Mrs. Horace G. Fisher.

Mr. Frank Travers is the happy husband of a hundred thousand, with the miserable incumbrance of an invalid widow of a West India planter. He daily listens to her account of her failing strength with a commendable degree of fortitude; and is entirely unaware that she has executed a will in favor of her brother, who is waiting patiently for the hour when the establishment shall change owners.

THE FIVE DOLLAR BILL.

NO. III.—THE GAMBLERS.

BY HARRY SUNDERLAND.

AFTER various changes, I was paid into the hands of a magistrate, by a poor fellow, who was thrown over to a constable to whom fees were due, and he exchanged me in a coffee-house, from which I went into the hands of a merchant, who gave me to his wife, and she paid me out to her milliner; the milliner sent me to market, where I passed about for a while among butchers and hucksters. During the afternoon, I was in Moyamensing prison; but the individual who took me there, sent me by the hand of an officer to his wife. She would fain have kept me, but was not able. By nightfall, I was in the pocket of a gentleman living in Walnut street. He gave a large party that evening. If I could linger to do so, I would like to describe the brilliant spectacle I witnessed. There was a large assemblage of beauty and fashion. Everything was in the most costly and elegant style.

In the crowded rooms, I several times noticed a fair, intelligent-looking young man, whose restless eye, and frequent quick unconscious movements, too surely indicated a mind that was ill at ease. He danced, occasionally, but without taking much interest in what he was doing. I missed him at least two hours before the company dispersed.

On the next morning, I went again to the market-house. There I got into the pocket of the keeper of a large hotel, on Chestnut street, and, towards mid-day, he changed a twenty dollar bill for the restless young man I had noticed at the party, on the previous evening, and I passed into his hands. In his pocket-book, I met several old friends, with whom I spent the rest of the day, relating my own, or listening to their adventures.

About eight o'clock that evening, the young man in whose pocket I was at rest, arose from the bed upon which he had been lying in his room at the hotel, and for at least an hour paced, uneasily, the floor. From his manner it was evident that he was debating some question of interest, and that there was a severe struggle in his mind. Once during his uneasy perambulations, he sat down at a table, and taking out his pocket-book, carefully counted over its contents. The whole sum, my humble self included, was just four hundred and thirty dollars. The precise knowledge of what his pocket-book contained did not appear to afford him much pleasure.

"Four hundred and thirty dollars!" he muttered, as he crowded us back into our repository, and thrusting that, with an impatient gesture, into his pocket, arose and commenced walking the floor again. "Four hundred and thirty dollars!" he repeated, with much bitterness. "It was over four thousand last night.

But what was that? I had twenty thousand entrusted to me; and here is all that remains. Accursed infatuation! Knowing the danger, why was I mad enough to tempt my own ruin? But it is too late now. One more effort to recover myself—one more fierce struggle—and all will be over. Dare I hope for success? Oh, if fortune would smile upon me but this once, and restore me what I have lost, that I might step back, trembling, from this gulf that opens darkly at my feet!"

The unhappy young man was deeply moved. He sunk into a chair, and burying his face in his hands, gave way to the weakness of tears. A stern calmness succeeded to this.

"Now for the last throw," he said, rising up, with a countenance from which had fled all traces of emotion. Going to his trunk, he took therefrom a pistol, and, after carefully loading and capping it, replaced the weapon with the single remark.

"That will do its work well, if needed."

He then left the hotel and walked with a rapid step for a few squares, when he stopped at a large and handsome dwelling, the whole front of which was dark. He pulled the bell; paused a moment; pulled again, and again paused. At the third distinct ring, the door flew open, and he passed into the dark vestibule. When the inner door turned on its hinges—but not until the outer one had been carefully closed—a flood of light burst upon him. He moved through richly furnished and brilliantly lighted rooms, without so much as casting a glance at those within them, or noticing the elegance and taste with which they were fitted up. I had been there before, as well as he, and had witnessed scenes which, if related, would make the reader's heart grow cold. I knew whither his steps were tending, and the purpose in his mind, as he ascended to the third story; but felt how great and almost fatal was the error he committed, when he paused at a bar, liberally furnished with everything to eat and drink, and swallowed a large glass of brandy to steady his quivering nerves. I knew that the artificial composure to be derived from brandy would not be sufficient to sustain him to a safe issue in the struggle before him. He needed the coolness of a well balanced mind.

In the bar-room he took a few turns across the floor, until he began to feel the effects of the brandy, and then went deliberately to a large apartment in the front of the building, in which several persons were engaged at cards. He was not long in meeting with what he sought—a partner. The individual with whom he sat down to play was no stranger to me—he was one of the principals of the establishment

and a man who rarely trusted to either chance or skill in a game at cards, and who rarely lost when he played.

The unhappy young man saw not the odds that were against him. He played with unusual skill, showing himself to be a perfect master of the game—it was in this skill that he fondly trusted—but what is skill opposed to such an antagonist as he had, who knew the back of every card in his adversary's hand as well as he knew the faces of those in his own. Steadily the tide of fortune went against him, until he played with a recklessness and desperation that made his ruin only the more certain and easy of accomplishment. An hour from the time he entered that place, he rushed from it, without a dollar in his pocket. The consequences he had dreaded, too surely came. I know not whether he committed the still madder act he contemplated.

All human sympathies must have been dead in the heart of the wretch who so coldly and wickedly robbed that unhappy young man, or he could not have looked upon his pale despairing face, mild eyes, and bloodless lips, when the last card, upon which he had staked his last hope, turned up against him, without restoring what he had won. But he looked away from that face, and let his eyes rest upon his booty. The sight of that held down all weak emotions.

"Another fly has burnt his wings in your candle, I see," said a confederate, joining the gambler after the young man had fled from the house.

"Yes; but the poor devil was lower than I thought

for. I expected at least four or five thousand more."

"How much have you won to-night?"

"Only a little over four hundred."

"Hardly worth the trouble. I got nearly four thousand out of him last night."

"Every little helps. We must take care of the small gains, as well as the large ones. But, as I have pocketed ten thousand of the money entrusted to him—ha! ha! a safe man to entrust money with, wasn't he—I don't think I need complain."

"I suppose he will blow his brains out on the strength of his successes to-night?"

"I hope so—that is, if he have any left, poor devil! The best thing a fellow like him can do, is to shuffle off this mortal coil. His head will rest easier."

"Dead men tell no tales."

"Just what I mean. Sometimes a fellow like him, after losing everything, awakens into a virtuous indignation against gentlemen of our cloth, raises a hue and cry, and then there is the deuce to pay, and all that. I guess he'll tip the trigger, though. He looks to me like a game bird."

And thus these wretches, half in jest and half in earnest, talked of the miserable victim of their infernal arts, while I was transferred from the table, where the young man had placed me, to the pocket of the gambler, where I lay undisturbed until the next night, when I witnessed other scenes in that den of crime. But the history of my week is ended.

HARRIETTE.

A SKETCH FROM OUR VILLAGE.

BY MRS. D. ELLEN GOODMAN.

GENTLE reader—wast ever in dear, delightful Flowervale! I will take it for granted you are a stranger to its beauties, and, if you please, will accompany you to the brow of that declivity where stands the ancient church, its tall spire pointing like a snowy figure up through the matted foliage to Heaven. It is a mossy, verdant little knoll, with rows of stately maples, one above the other, encircling and folding the holy edifice in a kind embrace; while through the thick quivering leaves its white walls gleam out and glisten in the pure sunlight.

We will stand upon the stone steps of the old door, and gaze for a few moments abroad. It is a fine May day, and the soft breezes whisper among the interwoven boughs of the tall maples, and lift the tresses from our brows, bringing to the heated cheek a coolness, and breathing into the heart a calm and sacred feeling. It is beautiful—the landscape all around. See—yonder to the right is a smooth, placid river, winding gently along through meadows of rich green turf, from whose deep velvet bosom are springing sweet, wild violets, and delicate blue-bells, and pure spotless lilies, mingling their rich varied colors with the glossy green leaves, and blending their fragrance with the low ripple of the rills. Scattered over the variegated carpet are clumps of apple and cherry trees, whose knotty branches bend beneath their crown of clustering pink and white blossoms, whose balmy breath is borne up through the lovely vale to the old church door. Along the western side of the meadow, and a few rods from the river bank, the land gently rises, and stretches on to the edge of a dark, magnificent forest of old oaks, whose giant arms interlock and seem mingling with the snowy clouds which hang lazily down from their blue throne, as if to connect the laughing skies with the beautiful things of earth, over which they bend so lovingly. There is a narrow, well-trodden foot-path winding through the meadows, and across the murmuring stream is thrown a rustic bridge, with slender railings; then the path continues on and up the hill-side, terminating before the door of the old *White House*.

Venerable pile! It has stood for ages immovable, while beauty has faded, and youth passed to old age; and now it too shows strong signs of decay. The dark brown walls seem tottering on their foundation, and lean heavily over the green bank, while the soft spring winds lose their sweet melody as they creep coldly through the open door and broken window panes, whispering sadly and plaintively. But we will turn from the dilapidated mansion and look just forward here, through the thick foliage. A pretty view—is it not? The road stretches along, like a

thread of gold, as far as the eye can reach, terminating to the sight just where that tiny spire blends its whiteness with the dark azure of Heaven. And see the snowy cottages on either side of the way, with their neat white fences and green door yards, their bright flower gardens and refreshing shade trees. Now, to the left—a bold mountain, with its dizzy height, rises in awful majesty, and throws its deep shadow along the vale, while the old trees which crown its lofty summit, bend gracefully beneath the spring zephyr that sweeps through their leafy robes, and descends soothingly to the valley below. It is a quiet, lovely scene on either hand, with the new, fresh leaves twittering in the breath of Heaven, and whispering to the buds and blossoms which nestle in the tall grass, and the golden sunlight struggling through the tangled foliage, throwing over the whole a soft and tremulous light. But come with me, dear reader, along the yielding sward, to the back of the old church. Tread lightly, for these modest, meek-eyed violets are all too beautiful to be crushed beneath a careless foot; and they grow spontaneously upon this hallowed spot, and look like gentle spirits dropped from the blue vault above to slumber in the shadows of this holy house.

Do you see that little red school-house, with its snowy enclosure, nestling down in the shade of that huge oak tree? It is but a few rods from the base of this hillock, and the turf about the door looks even greener and fresher than this beneath our feet in the short distance. Now cast your eye over the low roof, across that narrow portal of green, to the fairy lake that sparkles in this flooding light. Oh! is it not beautiful, the blue sky slumbering on its peaceful breast, and the mossy brink everywhere decked with flowery shrubs and drooping boughs? and then that grove of maples reaching down almost to the velvet edge, their tall dark shadows just blending with the deep azure which dyes its waters! I never saw a prettier grove. The trees are all large and perfectly straight; and about the smooth trunks, many a clambering vine has wound its tender fibres, while from many a shady recess the sweetest flowers are shining, and all through the fairy arbor bright birds are flitting with noiseless wing.

It was just such a day as that we have been dreaming of. Bright, fresh, *glorious* May was smiling her *adieu* to earth, and her joyous, lavish successor stood ready, with an armful of beautiful, tiny buds, which but one balmy breath of hers could fan into blossom; the merry birds gave out their parting song, and the fragrant atmosphere seemed condensed into a thin, haze-like vapor, which absorbed the bright, pure

light, as it came from its throne above, and held the golden rays as by a magic spell, until the land seemed slumbering beneath a shadowy mantle, and the tiny birds went floating by intoxicated with a wild, unearthly joy. Oh, how the warm, kindly feelings of the hidden heart gush forth at such a time; and how all evil thoughts flow back to their dark source, and the soul is susceptible of but one emotion—that of *love*—love for everything around—the lovely flower, the singing bird, and the little buzzing insect that hums forth its gladness.

Yes—it was on such a day that Minda and I passed through the little gate, and, arm in arm, slowly proceeded to the neat, red school-house, behind the church. We had promised the little girls, Anne and Lizzy, to go and view their May-day festivities, and we could not have a heart to disappoint the sweet creatures. As we approached the low door, which stood open, soft bird-like music came murmuring on the laden air; and it was such music as could only come from the full heart of a fairy—at least so we thought, as we stood listening, till its last note trembled on the ear and died away in the stillness of death. Then a light foot-fall sounded along the floor, and the fairy herself, clad in a flowing robe of white, stood before us. Both hands were extended, as she grasped one of ours, and bent her bright lips over for the kiss of welcome, while with a merry laugh she cried—

“Well, girls, give me credit for the patience of a Job—for I have been waiting full a half hour for your appearance, and in five minutes had left you to find unaided our sylvan retreat.”

“But where, pray, have you hidden your flock, Harriette,” I exclaimed, gazing in wonder over the deserted school-room and vacant seats.

“Oh, we will find them presently,” was her reply, as she led the way through the green meadow and around the quiet lake toward the maple grove. As we drew near the shadow of the tall trees, and peered through them into the distance, a snowy robe now and then caught our eye, and the murmur of soft voices came gradually to the ear. All at once a ringing laugh, so full of melody that we started forward, was heard—then a white dress floated among the shrubbery, and a little face all radiant with smiles gleamed out from the thousand flaxen curls that streamed back on the breeze, and Lizzy—our dear little pet Lizzy—came all breathless and panting before us.

“Oh! Harriette—dear cousin Harriette,” she cried, grasping both hands of her teacher, and pulling her eagerly forward, “do hurry, for they are crowning sister Anne Queen; and oh, that pretty garland is so sweet. Come, hurry!” she added, casting an imploring glance at Minda and myself, and the next moment her tiny feet were tripping back.

We passed rapidly on, and all at once came upon the little band of wood nymphs. There they were, scattered over the rich sward, their glad eyes dancing in joyousness, and their sweet, happy faces clothed in smiles, while now and then a golden ray came creeping through the canopy of leaves above, and trembled over the snowy forehead and lingered upon the rosy cheek. The youngest of the company were

sitting upon the moss-covered ground, breathing out their gladness in words of childish simplicity, and clapping their little hands, while their beaming eyes often turned toward a group of older girls at a little distance, who seemed very busy, speaking only in gentle murmurs, and their sylph-like figures moving noiselessly about the object of their attention, which was entirely hidden from our view. At last, their work completed, the little band separated to the right and left, and we had a full and enchanting view of the youthful Queen. Beautiful she looked, seated upon her grassy platform, with the garland of rose-buds and lilies lightly pressing her brown ringlets, and a faint flush overspreading her cheeks. The smile that lighted up her large, hazel eye, and lay in the dimples about her sweet mouth, was indeed very beautiful. One moment she sat motionless, while a stillness like that of the grave hung about those old woods, and the eyes of all the gathered group dwelt admiringly upon her; then her glance fell upon the loving face of her dear teacher, and, with one bound, she was at her side.

“Come, dear Harriette,” she said, leading the unsisting form up to the flower-sprinkled throne, and seating her astonished friend upon the queenly chair. “Come, *you* shall be our May Queen—your sweet face would look so pretty under this beautiful wreath!”

The next moment, the crown was lifted from her own soft curls, and laid lightly over the heavy braids of Harriette’s jetty hair, while the face that blushed and glowed, and the eyes that beamed beneath it, were those of angel loveliness. She opened her laughing lips to remonstrate, but her low tones were lost amid the shout which rung out from that merry band, as they clapped their snowy hands, and their “Long live the Queen!” resounded over the calm bosom of the peaceful lake and up through the interwoven branches of the thick grove, till echo brought back from the arching skies and the mountain side the faint and silvery notes, and “Long live our Queen,” seemed whispered by the rustling leaves and the murmur of the rill. Then the glad-hearted children surrounded their beloved teacher, some hanging about her neck, and some sitting at her feet, with their languishing eyes fixed upon her face, and words of affection flowing from their ruby lips. After a while, the fairy May Queen waved her flowery sceptre over the clustering, curly heads, and, hiding her sweet smiles under the snowy lids which drooped over her dark eyes, rose, with all the grace and dignity of royalty itself, and her gentle voice broke over the silence like the music of a harp touched by zephyr’s breath. Her speech was brief, but full of love and gratitude and gentle teachings, and when she sat down, the deathly hush of all that childish train told its effect upon their young hearts. All at once, one soft, tremulous voice broke the spell, and immediately all joined in the song, and Minda and I held our breath to catch the thrilling melody.

We crown thee Queen—
Thou with the dark hair and gentle eye;
The ivy green
Is twined with the rose-bud of delicate dye;

The lily too
With its snowy bosom all wet with dew—
And violets
From their shady nook we've culled for you.

We've wandered o'er
The soft green meadows in quest of flowers,
And by the shore
Of lake and stream, for many long hours;
Then sat us down
In this cool, and sweet, and shadowy place,
To weave a crown—
A beautiful garland—for thy dear face.

The lily fair,
With its leaves all spotless, and pure and white,
In thy dark hair
Looks forth like a spirit of beauty and light;
The sweet blush rose
Has nestled beside thy soft bright cheek,
And violet
Looks forth from its curtain with glances meek.

Oh, touch her brow
With a light, soft pressure, sweet wreath of flowers!
And whisper low
Of hope and comfort in future hours;
From her fond heart,
Oh, banish each feeling of grief and care!
And never depart,
The deep, pure thoughts thou hast planted there!

The song ceased; but the fluttering birds, who with us had held their breath, soon caught the dying echo, and another chorus arose far up in the shady trees, not more sweet and thrilling than the bird-like music they tried to imitate. A few moments more, and the little hands of the busy throng had spread over the bright carpeted ground a snowy cloth, and brought forward from the shadows of the huge trunks their baskets filled with refreshments, and we seated ourselves upon the soft turf with hearts brimful of joy and gladness.

The sun had sunk behind the hills, and his bright rays ceased to flood the grove with golden light, when we passed from the deep shadow of the forest, and slowly took our way homeward. Every young heart was satisfied, for it had had its fulness of joy; and, though the wreathing smile had departed, and given place to a look of calm contented enjoyment, the fond and beaming eye was expressive of the peace and happiness within.

Days and weeks passed away, and the youthful school-mistress mingled with her childish train, ever joyous, ever smiling. They had learned to love her with an all-absorbing affection, and were always happy beneath her smile and approving glance. She was our favorite friend and companion—Minda's and mine; and in our morning rambles and evening walks, was ever by our side. Her foot was nimblest in climbing the steep mountain's side, and her laugh merriest on its top; and it was her hand which always culled the fairest blossoms, and her white brow that wore them. Sometimes, when the smile was brightest in her dark eye, and the laugh on her red lip clearest and merriest, we have whispered in her ear a name—one little name—which brought the blood from her leaping heart to neck, cheek and brow, and made the joyous laugh die away in a low, tremulous

murmur. Yes—there was a charm in that name more powerful than all surrounding influences, and after it fell upon her ear, her voice was always lower and sweeter, and the beautiful smile fainter—but oh, how expressive!

Dear Harriette! I remember well one evening—it was a calm moonlight night—we had wandered far over the mountain's summit, had plucked many flowers, the sweetest and rarest in all that region, and, with our arms full of the bright things, had descended to the clump of oaks just at the foot of the hill. Here we laid our burden on the green sward, streaked all over with silver threads, formed by the moon's pale rays penetrating the large, clustering leaves above, and, kneeling around the tempting pile, we framed a wreath of exquisite beauty, made up of opening buds and fully expanded blossoms of various colors, intermingled with ivy vines and spruce twigs. When the long, rich wreath was finished, we threw it over the white shoulders of Henriette, and our eyes sparkled as we watched its effect upon her graceful figure. A light, musical laugh had just burst from the open lips of our fairy, and its echo was flung back from the dark mountain, when a low foot-fall sounded along the ground, and the next moment a pair of large, eloquent eyes had brought a flush to the pure brow, and a tremor to the fingers, which clasped the garland, while the laughing orbs hid their intense light beneath their jetty curtains. A smile of exquisite pleasure lay on the lips of the youth, and as he passed to the side of the blushing girl and wound the long, dangling garland about her shoulders, till her slight form was literally buried in its beautiful mantle—all but the lovely face, which looked more lovely than ever—we read in his soul-lit countenance the deep love he bore the pure bright being whom he claimed as his betrothed bride.

We passed silently from the shade of the old oaks, for the heart of each was full—full of gentle, kindly emotions—of poetry and romance. There was a holy hush in the calm air—a soothing power in the soft, peerless face of the silver queen, which gazed upon us from her star-spangled pathway in the blue Heavens; and then the faint, tremulous murmur of the distant river came floating along over the green meadows with a sweet sadness in its tone that seemed to whisper of a purer—a brighter realm, where the beautiful of earth receive that crown of glory which is fadeless and imperishable. The low, trembling “Good night” of Harriette awoke Minda and myself from our pleasant dreams, as we approached the cottage door, and we watched her slight figure leaning upon the arm of her companion, till it was lost in the distance; then with subdued and tranquil feelings went our way.

The last day of summer had glided away; yet its mild breath still lay upon the green fields and hill-sides, and its flowers bloomed beside the path, though we fancied their sweet faces had grown a shade paler, and that their gentle heads drooped a little upon the slight stems. The air was still balmy and refreshing and had it not been for now and then a trembling leaf of red and yellow, which looked out from the deep green of the forest foliage, we could hardly have

believed that those "melancholy days, the saddest of the year," were close upon us.

It was a fresh, bright morning when Minda and I looked out from the half closed blinds of the cottage windows, and anxiously up the road to the school-house door. It was closed; but a troop of fair-haired girls surrounded it, looking now wistfully up to the shaded windows, and then down the pathway toward the sweet home of their worshipped teacher, while their low murmuring voices came floating to our ears, and their sad young faces spoke volumes. At last a slender form came slowly across the green, and neared the little group; a tiny hand brushed the tear-drops from cheeks pale with fear and troubled thoughts, and Mary, the teacher's sweet, fair sister, stood among them. She told them something in husky tones, and then turned away, while every childish face was bathed in tears, as the sobbing little ones went silently to their homes. The warm drops streamed from the bright eyes of Anne and Lizzy, as they told in quivering voices of the illness of dear cousin Henriette; and Maria started to her feet, while a deathly paleness overspread her cheeks, and "Dear Henriette!" trembled on her white lips. The neat little cottage bonnet was soon drawn over her brown hair, and, grasping my hand with her trembling fingers, she drew me along the little foot-path which led across the quiet meadow, and in silence we entered the house of mourning. One moment we stood in the pretty parlor unwelcomed, unnoticed, while a fearful hush pervaded the whole house; then a low, mournful sobbing fell upon our ear, and a voice in broken murmurs came from the little bed-room at our left. We noiselessly opened the door, and stood by the sick girl's side.

There they were, the dear family circle, who but yesterday were happy, and blessed with health and peace;—the father, a man of noble mien and a proud, lofty soul, his ashy face half buried in the heavy folds of the curtains, and a suppressed moan heaving his agitated breast; the mother, with pallid lips and troubled eyes, bending above the couch, despair in every feature, and a voice tremulous but gentle as an infant's; Mary, the sweet young sister, kneeling by the bed-side, and weeping convulsively; and the brother, a manly youth, with the raven locks and full dark eyes of his idol sister, standing by his mother's side, his arms folded on his bosom, and a countenance of ghastly whiteness. And there too lay our own sweet, our precious Harriette, stricken and suffering. The snowy pillow which supported her head was not purer or whiter than her lips and cheek, and the long drooping lashes rested motionless, veiling the wild brightness of the orbs beneath; while the rich, heavy masses of her hair fell like a cloud about her ivory shoulders, and the pale right hand grasped the coverlid with an eager hold. Presently, the ashy lips opened, the quivering lids were slowly raised, and those deep brilliant eyes looked wonderingly round upon the agonized group—from her mother's bending form and tearful face, to the bowed head of her father, and then up into the calm, sad face of her brother, while almost insensibly a beautiful smile stole into her eyes and shed its sunshine over her

lovely face. Her lips moved long before any sound broke the spell that lay upon every heart, as we all watched breathlessly her speaking countenance: but at last the sweet melody broke forth, a low, mellow laugh sounded through the room, and words of mingled love and sadness came trembling from her heart.

"Oh! bind it gently on my brow, sweet Minda—that lovely wreath; and mingle with the pale, fair buds this cypress bough. Hush! I heard a step—it was *his*, dear cousin—his own! Hush!—it is gone—I thought him near—that he had come to say *adieu*, and clasp my hand once more, and breathe one word to my heart. There, dearest, that will do—the cypress bough shall rest untouched, but the roses will wither and die."

Poor, sweet Harriette! how we wept to hear her tender ravings, and how her mother's heart bled at every word. Through that long, weary day we watched her every motion—every look; and when the dim shades of evening crept over the little bedroom, and the moon's pale ray quivered upon the marble forehead of the invalid, and her breathing grew deeper and heavier, the old family physician wiped the tear-drops from his furrowed cheek, and turned sadly from the anxious faces bent upon him. There was no hope—the fair, frail flower had bent beneath the blast, and all effort to raise the drooping head was unavailing.

Silently did pain and disease do their cruel work; and, ere many days had passed, we stood around that humble bed, watching with chilled hearts and swollen eyes the death-struggle of the young, the beautiful. A soft, delicate rose-tint came through the muslin curtains, and lingered about each haggard face, while one ray—bright and golden—trembled upon the chill forehead of the dying girl. The dim eyes had been long closed, and the taper fingers folded gently upon the bosom from which the life was slowly gushing; but, all at once the drooping lids were raised, and a look of love—of recognition—beamed from the departing soul upon all around. A holy smile hovered upon the quivering, ashy lip, and a murmur, like the trembling notes of a harp touched by a summer breeze, broke the awful stillness.

"Mother—dear father—adieu! Brother—sweet Mary—farewell! Minda —"

Another name faltered upon her tongue, and her last look lingered upon that agonized face which bent in its paleness above her head. The spirit had fled; but so quietly, that the sleep which had come over her seemed like a slumber full of beautiful dreams. That heavenly smile never left the cold lips, and the beauty of the marble features was more lovely than when health and gladness shed their luster there.

Sweet Harriette—a bright, brief day was thine! But, though thy sun went down thus early, it departed without a cloud, and a light is shining round thy pathway now, more brilliant—more intensely beautiful—than in this changing world thy fond heart ever dreamed of. Pure, glorified spirits are thy companions—on thy shining brow is a golden crown, and thy fair fingers have swept the tremulous strings of

that lyre whose thrilling melody fills thy blest abode in Heaven.

They laid the cold, lovely clay in its coffin-bed, put back the clustering black hair from the white brow, and folded the stiffened fingers over the throbbless bosom; and, amid the convulsive sobbings of old and young, the solemn hearse, with its covering of black velvet sweeping the fresh green grass, passed through the quiet street, and up by the side of that placid lake and deep grove, to the still grave-yard. "Earth to earth, and dust to dust," was said by the white-haired pastor, and then on the fearful silence broke that dreadful sound which strikes to the heart's core

with such a withering weight—the cold earth and chill clods falling upon the coffin-lid. There was a burst of wild agony—a smothered cry—and we left her to her rest.

She lies there now—the velvet turf green and bright above her head, and many a modest flower and opening bud peeping from its rich luxuriance;—a snowy marble gleams out from among the waving boughs of a drooping willow, and a tall rose-bush mingles its blossoms and its leaves, twining along its smooth, pure surface, and almost concealing its simple inscription—**"HARRIETTE."**

THE ADOPTED CHILD.

BY A. C. ELLIOTT.

THAT WAS an anxious day for Mrs. Talbot, on which she was expecting her brother Reginald. Everything about the cottage was arranged as neatly as possible, and—a very unusual occurrence—all her eight little children were looking as nice and clean as if they were each the only object of her care. They seemed to be suffering rather than enjoying this unwonted tidiness; and there was great danger that, if their uncle did not soon make his appearance, all Mrs. Talbot's labor would be lost. But before she had quite put the finishing touch to her own toilet, the subdued murmur of childish voices informed her that the expected and almost dreaded personage had arrived; and hastening out, she was clasped to the breast of her only brother, for the first time for years.

Any one would have known at once that they were brother and sister, though the good-nature that beamed from his face had been exalted and purified to a much more spiritual expression in hers, and, though he was evidently some years older, there were no lines on his face like those that many cares and sorrows had traced on hers. He appeared to be one of those whose content sprang, not from rising above this lower world, but from finding abundant satisfaction in the good things of life. But, notwithstanding his want of elevation of character, he was a pleasant companion, overflowing as he was with kindness and good-nature. He did not tell his sister how changed and care-worn he thought her; neither did he ask for her husband, for he was the only one in the whole circle of his acquaintance, to whom he had a decided aversion; but he began immediately to play with the children, and to divert as much as possible all painful reminiscences by talking with the greatest rapidity.

Mrs. Talbot's story is one that has been so often told, and so much more often acted in real life, that it has become quite stale. A very pretty, gay girl, she married, against her family's consent, a man much beneath her in every respect. She was cast off by her father, and, for many years, dragged on a miserable life in poverty and distress. When her father died, Reginald, her only brother, settled upon her an annuity, just enough to keep her from want, for he did not wish that Mr. Talbot should derive any benefit from his connexion with him.

The gratitude Mrs. Talbot felt for Reginald's kindness was out of all proportion to the gift, for, little as it was for a man with his large income to bestow, it saved her from so much anxiety and distress, that she felt as though nothing could ever repay the debt. And when Mr. Churchill wrote to ask her permission to adopt one of her children, she felt that she could not refuse the request, much as it distressed her to grant

it. Her heart beat painfully as she dressed them herself, and wondered anxiously on which of her darlings his choice would fall. She hoped it would be one of the boys—Sam, the eldest, or Reginald, his namesake—or even little Charley or Mary—any one, but her wild, reckless Edith, or the baby. Every one knows how a mother's heart clings to her baby; but middle-aged gentlemen seldom have the same fondness for them, and so Mr. Churchill hardly gave the chubby staring little fellow a second look; but it was precisely the forward little Edith that won his whole heart in the first ten minutes, by her confidence, her playfulness, and her incessant chattering. She declared, as soon as she was asked, her readiness to go with him in his pretty carriage, to live with him, and to be his own little girl always. Mrs. Talbot hinted in vain that one of the boys or older children would suit him better probably; but he did not like little boys, he said, and Edith was just the right age, a child of four was no longer troublesome like an infant, but yet she was young enough to learn soon to look upon her uncle's house as her only home. Mr. Churchill was very positive in his choice, and as Mrs. Talbot had resolved to consent to his request, she had nothing to do but to get her little Edith ready to go as soon as possible, as Mr. Churchill was anxious to leave after dinner, to avoid meeting Mr. Talbot, who was away for the day under pretence of a business engagement.

Edith bore the parting with great composure, telling them not to cry, that she would soon be back. As long as she was riding she was very much amused; but when the carriage stopped at the inn, and she was put to bed in a strange room, her grief was uncontrollable. They tried in vain to quiet her. All night long her uncle sat by her, wondering to see such a young child display such strength of feeling. It was not till the dim light of morning was stealing through the closed blinds, that her sobs were hushed, and she was sleeping heavily, and, as it seemed to her tired uncle, refreshingly. The slumber came just in time to prevent his fulfilling the determination he had formed in the night—to take Edith back to her mother as soon as possible.

It was a long time before Edith could get used to her new home—a stately mansion, in an extensive park, at some little distance from New York. It seemed to her so lonely to have no one but her uncle to amuse her, after being accustomed to the companionship of so many children; but she did get used to it, and became exceedingly fond of Mr. Churchill, following him everywhere like his shadow. Mr. Churchill's wife was a selfish, disagreeable woman, who piqued herself not only on controlling her house, but her husband, too; and generally she succeeded

very well, but now and then she found Mr. Churchill quite unmanageable. One of these occasions was when he resolved to assist his sister, even though she persisted in living with Mr. Talbot; and another, when he informed her that he intended to adopt one of his nieces. This last step she resisted with all her might, and, when she found her efforts useless, she subsided into a state of sullen opposition, and resolved to have nothing to do with the child. It would have been well if she had been true to her determination; but she could not resist the temptation to reprove and check the little intruder on every possible occasion, till there sprang up a lasting feud between them—open and violent, on the part of Edith, and quiet and tormenting, on Mrs. Churchill's side.

As Edith grew up though, lovely, blooming and high-spirited, she saw that these quarrels seriously annoyed her uncle, who would sacrifice almost anything for peace, and so she tried to avoid her aunt as much as possible; and when she could not, to bear her rebukes without reply. This course served to render her still more disagreeable to Mrs. Churchill; but, as it pleased her uncle, Edith was contented.

Thus matters went on, till Edith had nearly reached her twenty-first year. She had been engaged since she was eighteen to Charles Devereux, a young man of good though reduced family, and of fine talents—a person who was every way agreeable to her uncle, and to whom she was very much attached. They would have been married before, but her uncle could not bear to part with her, and had exacted a promise from her not to leave him before she was twenty-one. This she had readily given; but Devereux himself complained bitterly of the delay. Time, however, effects marvellous changes, and one of the most wonderful that he produces is the disappearance of affection that we flatter ourselves is unchangeable.

Just three months before Edith's wedding day, Mr. Churchill died suddenly in a fit of apoplexy. Edith's grief was so violent and distressing that they feared for her reason; and her eldest brother was sent for by Mrs. Churchill, who informed him coldly that it was her desire that Edith should be taken home by him as soon after the funeral as possible, as her presence there had always been to her very undesirable. Samuel Talbot could not imagine why Mrs. Churchill should take such a tone, as he had always understood that his uncle intended to make Edith his heiress; but his astonishment was changed to indignation when he found that there was no will, but one made many years before, in which Mrs. Churchill was left all the property. He applied to Edith for an explanation, and, as soon as she comprehended him, she said that her uncle had told her but a short time before his death that he had left her all his fortune, excepting that during her life Mrs. Churchill was to have the house, with an income sufficient to support her in the style to which she had been accustomed. However, this will was nowhere to be found, and all but Edith and some who were very well acquainted with his feelings for her, thought that if he had ever made it he must have destroyed it himself; for Mrs. Churchill had always been known as a strictly upright, conscientious woman, and so she always had been,

except in some cases where her unamiable temper and strong prejudices had warped her from her naturally strong sense of right and wrong.

And so Edith returned to her old home after seventeen years of absence, sad and dejected, sorrowing so much for the death of her uncle that the loss of the inheritance was hardly considered as any grievance by her at first. Of course as months went by, and time, the grand consoler softened her distress, she felt, and felt at first acutely, the deprivation of many things which she had always considered as essential to her comfort. But her mother was as kind and devoted as ever; and her brothers and sisters, trained under so lovely and excellent an example, did all in their power to comfort her and make her losses seem light. Her father was the only one who complained, or aggravated in any way her distress, and this he did oftener by sneering allusions to her "fair-weather lover," as he called Devereux, than in any other way.

This annoyed her the more because, though she herself felt the utmost confidence in his affection, his silence and absence gave ample reason for comment and distrust. Edith had been at home for six weeks, and had not heard a word from him, or even seen him since her uncle's death, though always before when she had been making her yearly visit of four weeks at home, he had come up from New York once or twice to visit her. She could not help thinking it rather strange that he did not lay aside his business, however pressing it might be, and hasten to console her in her time of affliction. But he came at last; she caught a glimpse of him, as seated in a travelling carriage he drove quickly past her father's house to the inn. She wondered why he did not get out at the cottage as usual, and let the carriage go on; she wondered still more at his long delay in coming to her, and had begun to persuade herself that she must have been mistaken.

Restless and uneasy, she wandered from room to room, and at length took refuge in the little shrubbery in front of the cottage, where she spent the whole afternoon, either walking hastily through its winding pathway, or standing almost motionless with her eyes fixed on the gate. Her mother came out two or three times to call her in, but the last time she saw Edith hastening to meet Devereux, who had just entered, and so she drew back without speaking. It seemed to Mrs. Talbot a very little while, though, before the door of the little sitting-room opened quietly, and Edith entered with a face pale as marble, but as calm and unmoved, she seemed to be so determined to resist all expression of feeling that she had entirely overcome them.

"What is the matter, dear?" asked her mother; "where is Mr. Devereux? Didn't you ask him to stay to tea?"

"He has gone away, mother."

"Gone away!" exclaimed Mrs. Talbot; "not to New York?"

"Yes," said Edith, calmly, "he has returned to New York. He is not coming here again. Don't say anything about him to me just now, dear mother, and ask the others not to—I cannot bear it yet. I shall be better soon, I hope."

Edith's first struggle with her feelings when she found that it was her wealth and not herself that Devereux had sought, was more overpowering to her than all her previous sorrows. She felt so desolate and abandoned, and yet was so determined not to yield to her feelings, that though outwardly she appeared unusually composed, she felt herself to be in great danger of losing her reason. But the first bitterness of her grief over, she was astonished to find how easily she could uproot all those feelings of affection, which she had cherished so long that they had seemed once a part of her inmost being. To a high-spirited, lofty soul like Edith's, Devereux appeared so thoroughly contemptible and unworthy, that she at last began to regard her loss of fortune as a blessing rather than an affliction, in preventing her from becoming the wife and intimate companion of such a man.

Three years passed away, during which Edith felt that she had derived more real advantages from her sorrows, accompanied as they were by great blessings, than from all the worldly advantages she had previously enjoyed. She had changed from a spoiled and petted child, to a generous and self-denying woman, and had become a great favorite in her own family, where her energy and activity made her very useful. At the end of this time she married the clergyman of the parish, John Cavendish, a man every way worthy of her, and was not a little surprised to find that she was even happier in the little parsonage, with her limited income and manifold duties, than she had ever been as the rich Mr. Churchill's heiress. But it cannot be denied that she sometimes longed for a little of the wealth that she had formerly lavished so foolishly; especially after her little Reginald's birth, for whom she could not bear to anticipate the narrow sphere in which he would probably be condemned to move.

She was talking to her husband about it one evening when a letter came from Mrs. Churchill, requesting her to come to her as soon as possible. Edith suspected at once that the will so long desired in vain was found at last, and lost no time in obeying the summons. Mr. Cavendish could not accompany her, but was to follow her in a day or two; and she sent her child, now nearly two years old, to her mother, as she knew her aunt's temper too well to think that the presence of a noisy boy would be anything but a source of discomfort.

She was, therefore, alone when, after having saluted kindly the old domestic who came forward to welcome their former pet and little mistress, she entered the large, elegant drawing-room where her aunt generally sat. She met with a very different greeting from what she had expected; instead of the usual cold bow or stiff shake of the hand, Mrs. Churchill hastened toward her with a nervous, eager, impatient expression, kissed her hurriedly, complained of her delay, when in reality Edith had been half afraid that her aunt would think her very impatient, and telling her that her old room had been prepared for her, and that she must get herself ready for dinner as soon as possible, hurried her off without hardly allowing her to speak. Yet in this little time Edith had noticed a great change

in her aunt's once dignified and commanding appearance. She looked pale and harassed, and was restless and pre-occupied. She seemed to be alone too, and Edith had always heard that the house had been filled with her aunt's own relations ever since her departure.

Mrs. Churchill not only took no dinner herself, but was evidently so impatient to have the meal over, that Edith hardly allowed herself time to taste the dishes placed before her. When they were alone Mrs. Churchill began abruptly by asking Edith "what she thought her uncle had done with the will he told her he had made?"

"He told me," said Edith, "that he had put it in his secretary, and I always thought that it must have slipped into some crevice, or been carefully hid in some secret drawer that was known to no one but himself."

"Then you never suspected me, Edith?" asked her aunt.

"Oh, no! never for one moment! such a thought would never enter my head. I hope you have not supposed me guilty of such injustice?" said Edith.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Churchill, "it has seemed to me as though everybody must have suspected me, and I could bear it no longer. I did take it, Edith, here it is."

With these words, drawing the will from her pocket, she handed it to her astonished niece.

"I will tell you all about it, my child, and then I hope, though you must blame me, you will judge me more leniently than you do now. Your uncle gave it to me to read and I did not like it at all, and told him so, and we had quite a quarrel about it; however he consented to alter one clause in it which I objected to, and left it in my writing-desk till the lawyer who drew it up should come again, which he was expected to do in a few days. Your uncle knew I disliked you, or rather that I thought I did, yet my character for uprightness and truth was such that he never suspected me of being capable of committing so dishonorable an act as depriving you of your right.

"After his sudden death, when they were looking in vain for this very will, and applied at last to me, I yielded to a sudden and powerful impulse, and said that I knew nothing about it. I had no sooner spoken the words than I would have given all I gained by them and more too, to have recalled them—but I could not confess myself a thief, and neither could I bear the sight of you whom I had wronged. You know how harshly I sent you away, but you do not know how often I wished you to return. I found to my astonishment that I had really become attached to you, and that more than half my apparent dislike arose from my naturally perverse disposition and bad temper. My own relations, for whose sake I had committed so great a crime, disgusted me by their sycophancy and deceit, and I longed for you, frank and hasty as you were. Besides a sense of my guilt preyed upon me, and I do not think I have had a moment's peace since you left. I could not bear it any longer, and so I sent for you. You may do as you please with the will, dear Edith, only I entreat you, don't make my guilt public, at least while I live.

I will give up this residence to you now, and all but a bare support—I shall feel better if I do so, I think—I can bear poverty but not infamy.”

But Edith would not hear of her aunt's doing that; she insisted on her retaining all the privileges given to her by the will, and always allowed it to be supposed, even by her husband, that her aunt had accidentally discovered the long-lost document, which her sense of justice would not permit her to suppress. Consequently Mrs. Churchill's character stood higher

than ever, and she lived and died more than ever respected and esteemed.

Edith often met Charles Devereux, after she had removed to a place not far from her aunt's residence, and never did so without making a mental comparison between him and her husband, and thanking Providence for the troubles that had shown her the worthlessness of the one, and the value of the other. As for him he married an heiress, his grand object in life, but whether he was happy or not no one could tell.

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THE MAIDEN'S CHOICE.

BY KATE SUTHERLAND.

KATE DARLINGTON was a belle and a beauty; and had, as might be supposed, not a few admirers. Some were attracted by her person; some by her winning manners, and not a few by the wealth of her family. But though sweet Kate was both a belle and a beauty, she was a shrewd, clear seeing girl, and had far more penetration into character than belles and beauties are generally thought to possess. For the whole tribe of American dandies, with their disfiguring moustaches and imperials, she had a most hearty contempt. Hair never made up, with her, for the lack of brains.

But, as she was an heiress in expectancy, and moved in the most fashionable society, and was, with all, a gay and sprightly girl, Kate, as a natural consequence, drew around her the gilded moths of society, not a few of whom got their wings scorched, on approaching too near.

Many aspired to be lovers, and some, more ardent than the rest, boldly pressed forward and claimed her hand. But Kate did not believe in the doctrine that love begets love in all cases. Were this so, it was clear that she would have to love half a dozen, for at least that number came kneeling to her with their hearts in their hands.

Mr. Darlington was a merchant. Among his clerks was the son of an old friend, who, in dying some years before, had earnestly solicited him to have some care over the lad, who at his death, would become friendless. In accordance with this last request, Mr. Darlington took the boy into his counting-room; and, in order that he might, with more fidelity, redeem his promise to the dying father, also received him into his family.

Edwin Lee proved himself not ungrateful for the kindness. In a few years he became one of Mr. Darlington's most active, trustworthy and intelligent clerks; while his kind, modest, gentlemanly deportment at home, won the favor and confidence of all the family. With Edwin, Kate grew up as with a brother. Their intercourse was of the most frank and confiding character.

But there came, at last, a change. Kate, from a graceful, sweet-tempered, affectionate girl, stepped forth almost in a day, it seemed to Edwin, a full grown, lovely woman, into whose eyes he could not look as steadily as before, and on whose beautiful face he could no longer gaze with the calmness of feeling he had until now enjoyed.

For awhile, Edwin could not understand the reason of this change. Kate was the same to him; and yet not the same. There was no distance—no reserve on her part; and yet, when he came into her presence, he felt his heart beat more quickly; and when she looked him steadily in the face, his eyes would droop, involuntarily, beneath her gaze.

Suddenly, Edwin awoke to a full realization of the fact that Kate was to him more than a gentle friend or a sweet sister. From that moment, he became reserved in his intercourse with her; and, after a short time, firmly made up his mind that it was his duty to retire from the family of his benefactor. The thought of endeavoring to win the heart of the beautiful girl, whom he had always loved as a sister, and now almost worshipped, was not for a moment entertained. To him there would have been so much of ingratitude in this, and so much that involved a base violation of Mr. Darlington's confidence, that he would have suffered anything rather than be guilty of such an act.

But, he could not leave the home where he had been so kindly regarded for years, without offering some reason that would be satisfactory. The true reason, he could not, of course, give. After looking at the subject in various lights, and debating it for a long time, Edwin could see no way in which he could withdraw from the family of Mr. Darlington, without betraying his secret, unless he were to leave the city at the same time. He, therefore, sought and obtained the situation of super-cargo in a vessel loading for Valparaiso.

When Edwin announced this fact to Mr. Darlington, the merchant was greatly surprised, and appeared hurt that the young man should take such a step without a word of consultation with him. Edwin tried to explain; but, as he had to conceal the real truth, his explanation rather tended to make things appear worse than better.

Kate heard the announcement with no less surprise than her father. The thing was so sudden, so unlooked for, and, moreover, so uncalled for, that she could not understand it. In order to take away any pecuniary reason for the step he was about to take, Mr. Darlington, after holding a long conversation with Edwin, made him offers far more advantageous than his proposed expedition could be to him, viewed in any light. But he made them in vain. Edwin acknowledged the kindness, in the warmest terms, but remained firm in his purpose to sail with the vessel.

"Why will you go away and leave us, Edwin?" said Kate, one evening when they happened to be alone, about two weeks before his expected departure. "I do think it very strange!"

Edwin had avoided, as much as possible, being alone with Kate, a fact which the observant maiden had not failed to notice. Their being alone now was from accident rather than design on his part.

"I think it right for me to go, Kate," the young man replied, as calmly as it was possible for him to speak under the circumstances. "And when I think it right to do a thing, I never hesitate or look back."

"You have a reason for going, of course. Why then not tell it frankly? Are we not all your friends?"

Edwin was silent, and his eyes rested upon the floor, while a deeper flush than usual was upon his face. Kate looked at him fixedly. Suddenly a new thought flashed through her mind, and the color on her own cheeks grew warmer. Her voice from that moment was lower and more tender; and her eyes, as she conversed with the young man, were never a moment from his face. As for him, his embarrassment in her presence was never more complete, and he betrayed the secret that was in his heart even while he felt the most earnest to conceal it. Conscious of this, he excused himself and retired as soon as it was possible to do so.

Kate sat thoughtful for some time after he had left. Then rising up, she went with a firm step to her father's room.

"I have found out," she said, speaking with great self composure, "the reason why Edwin persists in going away."

"Ah! What is the reason, Kate? I would give much to know."

"He is in love," replied Kate, promptly.

"In love! How do you know that?"

"I made the discovery to-night."

"Love should keep him at home, not drive him away," said Mr. Darlington.

"But he loves hopelessly," returned the maiden. "He is poor, and the object of his regard belongs to a wealthy family."

"And her friends will have nothing to do with him."

"I am not so sure of that. But he formed an acquaintance with the young lady under circumstances that would make it mean, in his eyes, to urge any claims upon her regard."

"Then honor as well as love takes him away."

"Honor in fact; not love. Love would make him stay," replied the maiden with a sparkling eye, and something of proud elevation in the tones of her voice.

A faint suspicion of the truth now came stealing on the mind of Mr. Darlington.

"Does the lady know of his preference for her?" he asked.

"Not through any word or act of his, designed to communicate a knowledge of the fact," replied Kate, her eyes falling under the earnest look bent upon her by Mr. Darlington.

"Has he made you his confidante?"

"No, sir. I doubt if the secret has ever passed his lips." Kate's face was beginning to crimson, but she drove back the tell-tale blood with a strong effort of the will.

"Then how came you possessed of it?" inquired the father.

The blood came back to her face with a rush, and she bent her head so that her dark glossy curls fell over and partly concealed it. In a moment or two she had regained her self-possession, and looking up, she answered.

"Secrets like this do not always need oral or written language to make them known. Enough, father, that

I have discovered the fact that his heart is deeply imbued with a passion for one who knows well his virtues—his pure, true heart—his manly sense of honor; with a passion for one who has looked upon him till now as a brother, but who henceforth must regard him with a different and higher feeling."

Kate's voice trembled. As she uttered the last few words, she lost control of herself, and bent forward and hid her face upon her father's arm.

Mr. Darlington, as might well be supposed, was taken altogether by surprise at so unexpected an announcement. The language used by his daughter needed no interpretation. She was the maiden beloved by his clerk.

"Kate," said he, after a moment or two of hurried reflection, "this is a very serious matter. Edwin is only a poor clerk, and you —"

"And I!"—said Kate, rising up, and taking the words from her father—"and I am the daughter of a man who can appreciate what is excellent in even those who are humblest in the eyes of the world. Father, is not Edwin far superior to the artificial men who flutter around every young lady who now makes her appearance in the circle where we move? Knowing him as you do, I am sure you will say yes."

"But, Kate —"

"Father, don't let us argue this point. Do you want Edwin to go away?" And the young girl laid her hand upon her parent, and looked him in the face with unresisting affection.

"No, dear; I certainly don't wish him to go."

"Nor do I," returned the maiden, as she leaned forward again, and laid her face upon his arm. In a little while she arose, and, with her countenance turned partly away, said—

"Tell him not to go, father —"

And with these words she retired from the room.

On the next evening, as Edwin was sitting alone in one of the drawing-rooms, thinking on the long night of absence that awaited him, Mr. Darlington came in, accompanied by Kate. They seated themselves near the young man, who showed some sense of embarrassment. There was no suspense, however, for Mr. Darlington said—

"Edwin, we none of us wish you to go away. You know that I have urged every consideration in my power, and now I have consented to unite with Kate in renewing a request for you to remain. Up to this time, you have declined giving a satisfactory reason for your sudden resolution to leave; but a reason is due to us—to me in particular—and I now most earnestly conjure you to give it."

The young man at this became greatly agitated, but did not venture to make a reply.

"You are still silent on the subject," said Mr. Darlington.

"He will not go, father," said Kate, in a tender, appealing voice. "I know he will not go. We cannot let him go. Kinder friends he will not find anywhere than he has here. And we shall miss him from our home circle. There will be a vacant place at our board. Will you be happier away, Edwin?"

The last sentence was uttered in a tone of sisterly affection. She had a supercargo on board; but his name was not Edwin Lee.

“Happier!” exclaimed the young man, thrown off his guard. “Happier! I shall be wretched while away.” Fashionable people were greatly surprised when the beautiful Kate Darlington married her father’s clerk; and moustached dandies curled their lip, but it mattered not to Kate. She had married a man in whose worth, affection, and manliness of character, she could repose a rational confidence. If not a fashionable, she was a happy wife.

“Then why go?” returned Kate, tenderly.

At this stage of affairs, Mr. Darlington got up, and retired; and we think we had as well retire with the reader.

The good ship “Leonora” sailed in about ten days.

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THE CHILD OF VISIONS!

BY JANE GAY.

On its cradle-couch a beautiful child was reposing! Smiles and shadows were flitting over its infant features like bursts of sunshine through broken clouds. It was a young bud of earth encasing a Heavenly dew-drop!

There was a low murmur like a dream-voice, and slowly the blue-veined lids were half-unclosed; and a pair of soft grey eyes looked timidly round from object to object. The weight of slumber was still heavy upon them, and the long lashes were soon laid again on the rosy cheek of childhood: but another murmur, and the tiny hands were outstretched, and the glance of the sleeper was upward. Gaze softly—it is the child's first vision! Angels are now fulfilling their earthly mission, and unfolding to this young heir of Heaven their first lesson from the book of Life. No wonder then that shadows mingle with the smiles of infancy, as they whisper that her new and untrodden pathway is onward from the happy Eden! No wonder she startles and murmurs as they reveal to her that the "Tree of knowledge of good and evil" has been plucked for her to eat—and that every taste will remove her further from the "Tree of Life," for whose blessed fruits she will ever be thirsting.

She awoke—but tears were in her eyes, and they called the child "Mary," though they wondered much why she should weep.

Years have passed. A group of fair young creatures are sporting amid the flowers and sunshine of June. The sky hangs over them its pure blue mantle, and the voices of myriad creatures are ringing with gladness; yet the band of young immortals are the happiest of all. But look! One has stolen away from the gay throng and pillowed her young head upon the green grass, while her mild, grey eyes are cast upward to the bright blue sky with a fixed and earnest expression. The pastime is no longer heeded—the ringing shout is unheard; for the child of visions is beckoned upward to higher companionship.

"Mary, Mary, don't desert your place so soon," cry a number of voices at once; "you promised to play with us this bright holiday!"

But the child listens not to the voices of her com-

panions—her dreams are above! A noble boy bends over her, whispering, "sister, come back!" but her look is still upward, and she heeds him not. He stoops and kisses her cheek, then exclaims, "run back to the goal, sister; we cannot play without you!" Then she murmurs, "yes, I see the goal," but her gaze is still upon the sky above her, and the green earth is forgotten. Vainly does that loving boy strive to arouse his sister from the deep revery into which she has fallen, for the angels are whispering mysteries which the gifted must learn.

That night the child pressed a feverish pillow, and many were gathered around her bedside. Until the grey of morning they watched and soothed her, but sleep came at length, and folded her in its quiet mantle, and they knew the danger was ended. When she awoke, the rose was paler on her cheek, but for the first time she comprehended that the seal of genius was stamped upon her; and she bowed her young head calmly and humbly to its inspiration—like a lily burdened with dew-drops.

Time has again sped on—and softly the twilight breezes are stealing through an open casement like angel-pinions, fanning the brow of a pale and dying maiden. It is the same fair brow of genius, but the shadows are all vanished now, and smiles like the setting sunbeams are gilding it with glory. The clear, grey eyes are lit up with Heavenly brightness, for the dimness has fled, and the last tear-drop has been wiped away forever. A home circle are gathered in that quiet chamber, and words of love are breathed forth from the heart's deep fulness. A manly youth sits by that lovely couch, and holds out the favorite offering of flowers. "They are beautiful," she murmurs: "cherish all things beautiful!" He spoke not, but pointed his finger to the last rays of the setting sun just fading in the deepening twilight, and again she whispers—

"Beautiful! My brother, may your last look on earth give promise of as bright a morrow."

"Mary is better to-night," said her mother, who watched the unwonted brightness of her countenance—"we will take her out to-morrow!"

Then long those loving ones held converse; and

the stars hung out their lamps in the arch of night. There was a sudden motion—and the eyes of the maiden were again lifted upward. They spoke to her, but she heeded them not. A low, child-like murmur broke on the still night-watchers, and again they heard the whispered “beautiful! ’Tis the angel with the snowy mantle, that comes to me in dreams!” Then a breath of fragrance passed through that noiseless chamber like the odor of unseen flowers, and the

marble features of the maiden were clad in spirit beauty.

It was her last vision! Those guardian watchers had come on their final mission, bearing an unsullied robe of Paradise for a pure and enfranchised spirit.

At day-dawn a band of weepers surrounded that snowy couch, and the morning light revealed the beautiful but faded tenement that for seventeen years had shrouded the Child of Visions!

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THE FANCY STORE; OR, MY FRIENDS OF THE COTTAGE.

BY JULIA A. PARKER.

CHAPTER I.

"The feeling heart, simplicity of life,
And elegance and taste." THOMSON.

STRANGE, is it not, that so large a share of the happiness or misery of a human being is dependent on the characters of those with whom he may come in contact in the ordinary concerns of life! The heart is a delicate instrument of many strings, which to the soft fingering of justice, kindness and sympathy, sends forth ever its sweet harmonies through the whole being—or utters the melancholy music of its breaking chords, when roughly swept by the thoughtless hand of selfishness! Until the day when the books shall be opened, wherein are recorded the secrets of our earthly existence, never shall we know how many budding hopes we have remorselessly trampled to the dust, that asked of us but a little fostering care—a single beam of kindness, to have made them like some sweet floweret of the vale that in the maturity of its loveliness opens its bosom to the sun, and in return for its cheering warmth yields up its very soul a fragrant holocaust to its benefactor! Never shall we know how many noble purposes we have unmeaningly frustrated, how many pure rills of human felicity we have unwittingly turned into waters of bitterness! Dost wonder, friend of mine, that my thoughts should have donned so sombre a drapery at the sight of that sweet country home, that nestles so peacefully amid the dark green foliage of its sylvan guardians, beneath whose drooping boughs sleep the sunshine and the shade, as if to remind of those mingled joys and sorrows, that, alas! are no stranger guests in the homes of earth? Thou shalt not wonder long. Seat thyself by me on this green knoll that commands a view of the charming portico, entwined with flowering vines that seem ambitious to reach the very summit of the cottage they adorn, bearing proudly aloft their precious burthens of beauty and perfume—or take my arm in the spirit of friendly converse, while we ramble among the woodlands that skirt the cultivated grounds around it, so tastefully arranged that poetry might wander enamored among their winding paths and sheltered arbors, exacting tribute from all bright things and fair with which to weave her web of golden fancies.

Rested thine eye ever upon a holier spot? I grant it not one of those sumptuous residences, where pride sits portress at the gate, and empty ceremony invites within a pageant throng to a participation of every joy, save those over which the heart presides. Ah, no! in many a more splendid residence have I been a guest, but this was a home of peace and love. At

richer banquets have I sat me down, but here was elegant and ample hospitality. In drawing-rooms more gorgeously furnished have I sought the happiness the world offers, but here was tasteful arrangement and that air of comfortable ease that stops short of magnificence. Elsewhere have I found louder pretension and warmer profession in friendship's cause, but here was a truthfulness and sincerity that stamp as genuine the currency of noble natures. And as I have gazed from yonder window, beneath which thou seest the clustering roses, on this river winding majestically through its rich strip of meadow land, ever and anon revealing itself to the eye like some mine of precious silver just escaped from its dark abode to meet the glorious sun and melt beneath his glance—or on the dim outline of the far-off mountains, which seem to invite upward the wings of thought, I have seemed to realize my beautiful *ideal* of an earthly Paradise! God be blessed for mountains! I would have *my* home in sight of the everlasting hills, whose "Heaven-built galleries," like the angel-ladder of patriarchal vision, link Heaven to earth in harmony, and make this little globe of ours a neighbor to the skies! But let me turn from nature, fascinating as she may be in all her varied loveliness, and full of that delicate sympathy with all our changeful moods, that the world does not always offer to talk of human hearts that have struggled nobly, albeit, to the superficial observer, as it were vainly—that have labored and waited—hoped and endured—yea, have been made perfect through sufferings.

Dr. Carver, the owner of this delightful retreat from the noise and bustle of our busy city of brotherly love, was the son of one of the most wealthy and respectable citizens of the town, and on the death of his father inherited with an elder brother an unincumbered and ample fortune. Having availed himself of the choice advantages for an acquaintance with medical science for which our good city is so renowned, he nobly resolved that, though independent, activity and usefulness should crown his future life. My first acquaintance with him commenced several years after his marriage with the lovely and accomplished Mary Layton, who, though an orphan and destitute of fortune, had been judiciously reared by a widowed aunt, under whose gentle guidance she had become every thing that is desirable in woman.

To yonder beautiful spot he brought his charming bride, and never did youthful lovers bind themselves by the irrevocable vow under happier auspices of the purest enjoyment that can gush forth from the sin-poisoned fountains of earth. With a perfect harmony of taste and feeling—worshipping alike the beautiful

and true in nature and art—living for and in each other, yet not unmindful of the claims of our common humanity and the higher ones of Heaven—surrounded by all those artificial elegancies that betoken refinement and cultivation, and which give such a charm to an existence otherwise blest, though often mistaken as themselves the sources of that felicity whose well-springs are the depths of our spiritual being. I say with such blessings in possession, and life's bright firmament so prophetic of unclouded days—so rich in the heart's inestimable wealth, that taketh to itself no wings, save those dove-like ones that waft it back from the world's turbulent waters to its sheltering ark of home, what golden dreams must have hovered like angels around the sanctuary of their hearts! What a roseate hue must have mantled upon the nectar of life's cup for them, and the great groan that Creation uttereth in her travail of woe all unheard, save a few faint echoes, like the distant murmuring of the sea that left no discord in the harmonies of their own being.

The summer of 18— found me an invalid in yonder pent-up and populous city, whose thousand roofs and glittering spires loom up proudly in the distance. Every one knows who has been shut up within his own walls, or threaded in the hot season the crowded streets of a town teeming with a busy population, when the eye looks up to avoid the glare of the burnished pavement—looks down dazzled with the bewildering sheen of the brassy Heavens above—closes in disgust at the legion of disagreeable sights that haunt your progress at every step—pallid and anxious faces that tell of care-worn existence—squalid and tattered poverty with premature decay written in fearful characters upon its brow—business, with his rapid step responding to the calls of interest, and hastening forward to his harvest of gain—in fine, when every sense seems the inlet of painful emotion, how eloquently and persuasively the soul pleads against the impoverishment to which she is subjected in the unnatural excitement of city life, and how our whole nature yearns for the green fields—the dancing rivulets and woodland solitudes of rural life! Yes, even in health deeper glows the cheek, and the eye kindles with new lustre as we anticipate an interval of release from the busy temporalities of artificial life which hang upon us with a baneful influence, as I have seen the dense parasite moss of a Southern clime sap the strength of a noble tree, and enshroud it in its own sombre drapery. But, to the invalid, in whose veins the tide of life creeps sluggishly—whose languid gaze and feeble steps appeal to the heart of sympathy, how life-inspiring, how almost *galvanic* the sweet dream of the health-breathing airs of nature's wild domain! And how we long in the language of the "Voices of the Night," to go

Into the blithe and breathing air,
 Into the solemn wood,
 Solemn and silent everywhere!
 Nature with folded hands seems there,
 Kneeling at her evening prayer!
 Or where the denser grove receives
 No sunlight from above,
 But the dark foliage interweaves
 In one unbroken roof of leaves,
 Underneath whose sloping eaves
 The shadows hardly move.

And here in this quiet, charming villa, I called upon hope to fulfil her sweet promises of the vigorous step—the elastic spirits—the warm, bright hue of returning health. But oh, the beautiful deceiver, like many another votary how long I called in vain. The balm-laden zephyrs fanned my cheek, but stole not the lily therefrom—they cooled my burning brow, but left no gift of strength behind. Anticipating no solacement from further medical aid, which I had hitherto found fruitless—disappointed in the fond belief that the pure influences of country life would be potent to stay the progress of disease, and say, "thus far and no further shalt thou go," yet with that strange tenacity with which we cling even to a life of suffering, I consented that Dr. Carver, of whose professional skill and rare success I had heard much, should be called to my aid. Wert thou ever an invalid? Then thou knowest how wildly the heart flutters in its alternations between hope and fear as the poor, trembling, nervous patient awaits the coming of one, whom he fancies the deputy of fate, commissioned to utter the terrific sentence, "dust thou art," or "take up thy bed and walk." My comfortable fauteuil had been drawn to the window, and as I sat up, as an invalid, holding in my hand a little gold repeater, that seemed determined in its sluggishness never again to tell me the hour, my imagination was busy delineating a little bustling sort of a man, with nostrums enough for a hospital, and a generous elevation of self-complacency, who at the first glimpse at my pale face and attenuated form had started back in ominous astonishment, in which dramatic attitude I read my irrevocable sentence! But surely never had the picture writing of this strange caricaturist been more at war with truth. My door opened, and before me stood a tall, superb figure, whose distinctive air was that manliness that seems to concentrate in itself the essence of all noble qualities, softened by a delicate, but unassuming expression of sympathy with suffering, that beamed from a soul-kindled eye, reminding one of the "gentle air of spring, as from the morning's dewy flowers it comes, full of their fragrance." With an easy gracefulness that bespoke a knowledge of the world, he kindly saluted me, and, without assuming that peculiar business air that seems to say my visit is a professional one, please hasten to the point and give me a list of your ailments, he made a few passing remarks on the beauty of the country at that lovely season, and noticing on my table a tasteful bouquet of wild flowers, which had been left there by a friend, that they might tell me a tale of their woodland home in their own sweet dialect, he said, "I will not ask you if you are fond of flowers? They are among the objects that we all love, and appeal to the purest and holiest sentiments of our nature. They are the illuminated manuscript of a God of love, in whose delicate tracery we read His wisdom, goodness and paternal care; for surely if *their* gentle and fragile lives are sustained by His Almighty energy, and clad in raiment more gorgeous than the spirit of beauty ever lavished upon a monarch's robes, may we not implicitly believe that His *intelligent creatures* are the far dearer objects of His goodness? This confidence gives us strength cheerfully to accept all the

allotments of His Providence, whether sickness or health—whether joy or sorrow.” And, severing a violet from its blue-robed sisterhood, he proceeded to show how the simplest flower that timidly opens its dewy eye to the morning is in itself a little volume of mysteries, which, when interpreted by the eye of taste, and a mind enriched with scientific lore, discourses most eloquently on the glorious attributes of the Great Artist, whose creations mock at the feeble attempts of human skill to imitate the inimitable!

Needless to say that the rich bursts of enthusiasm from his highly gifted intellect operated like a lethean, making me quite forgetful of every sensation of languor and suffering, and springing from my chair, I took from the few books on my mantle-piece a Botany, saying—“Dr. Carver, your remarks have awakened my passionate love of flowers, which with everything else of interest I was fast losing in my gloomy forebodings of early death. Does the country furnish many floral specimens for analysis?”

“Tis unusually rich,” replied he, “and seldom do I return from my professional excursions without some rare and beautiful gem for my already ponderous herbarium. And when you find yourself strong enough to take a little jaunt in the country I will send my carriage round for you, and Mary and my little Ada shall accompany you. They too love flowers, and in your collections and the picturesque scenery around us, I hope you may find your health and spirits invigorated.”

“I feel quite strong already, sir,” said I, “and fancy I could ride with only a trifle of fatigue.” Nay, but do not smile, patient listener, at the milder tone my malady had so suddenly assumed, and the unwonted vigor of the before drooping invalid. Necromancy there certainly was in the change—but it was the charm that lies in a deep knowledge of Hygeia’s laws, in the philosophy of which so few of her priesthood are initiated. He believed in the ability of the soul to work miracles, and that when she can be persuaded to use her high prerogatives, few are the drugs of the apothecary she calls to her aid. With the quick perception of an adept in his art, he had detected in his patient a desponding spirit, whose foreshadowings were dark as night—jealously watching every prelude of disease, closing a deaf ear to the sweet minstrelsy of nature and the glad voices of hope, and spurning the gentle solicitations of the thousand blessings, that in the saddest of human conditions would court the desponding heart and seduce it from its sorrows. Through the *soul* he had touched the springs of life, and the harmony of her delicate and intricate organization was about to be restored. A few simple tonics only remained upon my table after his departure. Ah, thought I, would that all whose high mission it is to visit the chamber of sickness and alleviate the ills of suffering humanity could speak words of comfort and hope to the disheartened spirit—could inspire serenity and resignation by pointing to that Being, who tenderly sympathizes in the sorrows of His children, and chastens but to sanctify—that all had power so to inspire the undying soul with a consciousness of its own superior dignity, as often to enable it to break from the thralldom of bodily infirmity.

The next visit of Dr. Carver, he led by the hand his little daughter, a sweet child of some seven summers, with a form over which the graces might have held their jubilee: a countenance modelled from a cherub’s, from which looked out such deep, intense blue eyes, as reveal a world of meaning in their expression, and betray all the soul within. And then her hair! oh, such hair! why a very shower of bright sunny curls hung upon her fine head, and lay about her white shoulders like a fountain’s descending spray upon the pure marble it bathes! Her voice was all melody, sweet as the tones which the ærial spirit awakens in his own trembling lute! What could I but love her ardently, passionately, devotedly? I drew her to me and kissed her pure brow, and pressed her tiny hand in mine, sealing an affection that from this moment never knew interruption. Daily did she come to light up the gloom of my invalid chamber by her almost seraphic loveliness, and charm to rest the dark spirits that hovered over it by the merry laugh of childhood’s joyousness. At her gentle entreaty I soon found myself drawn out to breathe the fresh air of the morning—to see the opening flowers, and hear the blithe carol of the birds which filled the very air with the gushes of their wild improvisation. Health, so long waned in vain, no longer refused her gladdening influences! Zephyrus now brought healing on his wings! The goblet of life again effervesced with hope and gladness, and earth, dismantled of the sombre hues in which a morbid fancy had so long invested her, once more appeared in the beauty and freshness of her primeval dawn! None but a convalescent can realize the ecstasy that attends on restored blessings, which are like the migratory birds that have left us in the winter of our desolation only to return with a richer plumage, a sweeter song.

The monotony of the day was now agreeably interrupted by the morning walk or ride in company with my little pet and her lovely mother, on a visit to some of the benevolent institutions that adorn the environs of the marble city, and throw over it that mantle of moral beauty, whose rich embroidery betrays the fair hands of Heaven-born charity—or perchance an excursion to the charming Wissahicon, where the sylvan deities still hold their court on the very borders of fashion’s and mammon’s domain—or by a ramble in pursuit of some of the “beauteous sisterhood” of wild flowers, whose gentle lives were to be sacrificed, and their remains embalmed in my flora’s repository. Thus passed a series of happy days, each cementing more firmly the links of a friendship commenced on their part in sympathy with suffering—on mine in gratitude for the most disinterested kindness and admiration of the purest and noblest qualities of human character that breathe of Eden ere the fall.

CHAPTER II.

“Let weaker natures suffer and despair,
Great souls snatch vigor from the stormy air!
Grief not the languor, but the action brings,
And clouds the horizon—but to nerve the wings.”

ANON.

As time’s silent car passed on, often and again I a guest at the cottage. Ada had grown up to be, if

possible, more beautiful and gifted even than the rich spring of her childhood promised. The idol of her parents, she had yet been judiciously reared, and taught by precept and example those grand moral lessons, without which talent is a fearful dower, and beauty a rose without perfume. Though an only child, her wayward fancies had not been allowed to rove at will—on the contrary she had early learned that lesson so needful to woman—a noble, self-sacrifice for the good and happiness of others. In addition to the best advantages of school education, her fine mind had received that home culture that blends and harmonizes all other acquirements, and like the skilful grouping of a picture, gives to each its relative place and importance, and to the whole a beautiful and unbroken unity. It had ever been the object of Dr. Carver to make his daughter a useful and practical woman, and though born to affluence to enrich her mind with those solid acquirements and habits of self-reliance, that might prove to her a source of comfort and peace in those dark days of life, from which wealth can purchase no exemption. "For," said he, "fortune, everywhere capricious, is especially so in a country like ours, and the tenure by which we hold her gifts exceedingly precarious. 'The immediate ancestors of the rich man of to-day have been too poor and menial for his narrow recollection, and children, on whose birth honor and magnificence attended, have worn the livery of servitude, and drank the cup of penury. I cannot insure my fortune to my daughter, therefore would I bequeath to her a legacy that adversity cannot destroy—that circumstances cannot depreciate.'"

But for Ada Carver, rich in youth, beauty, talent and fortune, what "death-telling seer" would have dared to array her future in any hues, save the gorgeous one of her own bright imaginations? Yet even now were the dark threads selected to be inwoven in her web of destiny—clouds yet invisible in her brilliant sky were seen now gathering to involve her day in an almost rayless night.

It was a summer's balmy morning, and we were all but Ada assembled in the breakfast parlor to enjoy the lengthened social meal, and to read and discuss in the intervals of our delicious coffee—that talk-exciting beverage—the news of the morning paper. Soon Ada joined us in her snow-white morning wrapper, her luxuriant hair imprisoned in one of those delicately simple caps that give such a charm to a lovely face. As a vision of beauty she appeared before us, and I fancied I saw an expression of joyful satisfaction in the face of her parents as she filled up the little circle, and bade us good morn in a voice "musical as silver bells."

The meal was still in progress, when a messenger entered announcing to Dr. Carver the entire destruction of his city property by a fire, which was still raging. He had just invested almost his entire fortune in town residences, eligibly situated, which promised to yield him in rents an ample income, and each day since the purchase had he intended to secure them by insurance, which a pressure of professional business had hitherto prevented. Thus by a single stroke of calamity's iron hand had his inheritance been swept away forever!

At this sad intelligence I rose to leave the room, feeling that a disaster so sudden and overwhelming might elicit even in minds so well fortified by religion's armor, those weaknesses and infirmities that should have no witnesses.

"Be seated again," said Dr. Carver, in a calm and untremulous voice. "We now have a test of the sincerity of our daily prayer, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.' God has taken us at our word, to make us feel that He is the sovereign Arbitrer of events, and has a perfect right to reclaim His gifts seeing, perhaps, that they are stealing our hearts from Him who will accept no divided homage."

Then taking the hand of his wife, whose silence more than words could have done, showed that she felt the blow which was to render her worshipped Ada the heir of poverty. "Mary," said he, "our inheritance is gone, but God in mercy has taken what we could best spare—but left all most needful to our happiness. He has left us each other—our endeared home—some friends that adversity cannot cool, and the means of still obtaining the essentials to enjoyment. I have health, and the profession which has hitherto served rather to fill up life usefully, will now answer a double purpose and insure us independence. You and my dear Ada," he continued, "shall never know while health is spared me any diminution of the comforts and elegancies of life; and if some of our summer friends should desert us, why we will cling only the more closely to each other; and the tried few who yet remain, and our wreath of happiness shall be fresh and fadeless as before."

A few bright, warm tears left their holy fountain to rest upon his hand, while the smile that played over the still lovely features of the wife, and the words, "I want no more," were eloquent in revealing how trifling the value of all other treasures compared with those inestimable gems that lie hidden in warm, truthful, loving hearts.

The next two years brought no change to the family of the cottage, save wearing a deeper channel for those warm affections that flowed onward in gladness and melody. But, alas! that the good should be the stricken ones of earth! Alas, that the citadel of the soul that has been once stormed by calamity, seems ever after more exposed to its attacks, and, like the ruthless invader, resists not till he has sacked and left desolate the fortress that has once yielded to his arms! I had seen the golden charm that mortals blindly worship fade away like the dewy garniture of the morning, and no wail of sorrow—no murmur of discontent broke upon the peaceful serenity of the cottage home. But how find words to paint the agony—the desolation—the despair that filled that hitherto happy abode when the husband—the father—the almost worshipped protector and guardian was brought in from one of his professional absences a senseless paralytic. God had indeed passed by in the whirlwind, and every hope earth-rooted seemed riven and blasted with the fierce tempest. To have breathed words of comfort *then* had been a mockery! There are some calamities that fall upon the spirit with a crushing, deadening weight, leaving the soul astonished, nay, stupefied with the greatness of its woe—when even

the soft pleadings of religion, and the gentle voices of sympathy are all unheard, and nought save the holy dew of time can give strength to arise and put on the garments of resignation. Such was this. For Mrs. Carver the shock had been too great, and nature sunk beneath the load. A violent and dangerous illness succeeded, and life's many stringed harp seemed about to utter its soft melody on earth—no more.

But as the warrior who weaves bright fancies from chivalry's romantic page in the soft indolence of peace, starts from his dreams and arrays himself for the fierce battle, whose thunder has aroused him, so did Ada Carver, a being so dependent and truthful in prosperity, nerve her spirit for a conflict that demanded a nobler heroism than that of the tented-field. Her native strength of character burst from the silken coils a charmed life had woven around it, and the rich fruits of early culture now clustered upon the young tree and mingled with its blossoms. As a superior being she moved through that mournful dwelling, now lending her gentle ministrations to an impotent father—anon, bending over the couch of a suffering mother. Her soft, white hand smoothed the pillow of sickness—bathed the burning brow—presented the healing drug, and prepared the delicate beverage. The day was to her one long act of self-sacrifice—the night of anxious watchfulness—yet she, who had ever been a stranger to bodily toil and corroding care, betrayed no look of weariness. A calm serenity lighted up her features—a lofty dignity sat upon her brow. Her only prayer had been for life—the lives of the two beings who seemed, in their turn, to depend upon her for support and comfort. She had not dared to ask for more, so great had seemed the boon she craved, and when, at length, health re-visited one parent, and the mind of the other became cloudless, though disease still held the body prisoner, she felt in the fulness of her gratitude an intensity of enjoyment which uninterrupted prosperity never knew. So true it is that when unvisited by sorrow, we are unconscious of our bliss; while our deepest and most extatic joys arise from a *contrast* with suffering doubt and fear. Strange it may be, yet I have sometimes fancied the felicity of Heaven would want vitality if *unmingled with tears!*

With Dr. Carver the hope of restoration to active life seemed chimerical. The nature of his disease—the severity of the attack forbade the indulgence of any fond anticipation, except that for some years he might be spared to his family as a friend and counsellor. Mrs. Carver was now sufficiently restored to take her place by the bedside of her husband; and Ada had once more leisure for rest and recreation. In one of these intervals she grasped my hand as we met in the garden walks, and said, "come with me, friend of mine, to my room. I have long wanted a private interview with you, and you will see that I have a little plan to reveal, in which you will be my counsellor, will you not?"

"Command me to the whole of my kingdom," replied I—"I am entirely at your bidding."

To her little boudoir we repaired, and seating herself, she said, "you see the misfortunes that have befallen our family—first our fortune, which we scarcely

missed, while richer blessings remained—then the illness of my father, that has left no hope behind. Though he has never spoken of our worldly condition, often in his dreams have I heard him allude to it so mournfully and bitterly, as to convince me that it is the burden of his thoughts by day. I have health and the ability now to labor for those on whom I have hitherto been dependent. Henceforth I live but for one object—to supply my parents by my own exertions with their accustomed comforts while they live—and to retain in our possession the home that has ever been so dear to us. Tell me now, Annie, how I may best attain my object!"

I began to remonstrate, and show how impossible I conceived it to be for one so young, so delicately and luxuriously bred, so unlearned in the world's ways, to go forth into the walks of business—to come in contact with the rough points of human character, and struggle for what had hitherto been enjoyed without an effort. "Only men endowed by nature, with sensibilities less acute than ours, or women reared in the highways of life can do this successfully. But how could you, Ada?"

"Tell me no more of this," said she. "All these considerations have been present to my mind, but they have not shaken me from my purpose. I feel myself strong to do what duty and affection alike prompt."

I saw that I had mistaken her character, that there was that in her that the fires of trial alone elicit and purify; that for her, suffering would consist in inaction, and silently I listened to the plan she had already matured.

"Have you not observed," she continued, "how large a portion of the mercantile business of our city is transacted by our sex, and that without degradation and apparently with immediate gain? Be not surprised when I tell you that I have thought of opening a store of fancy articles, similar to that of Mrs. M.'s, in — street. A few days since, when in town, I saw a bill upon her store, and, on inquiry, found that she had closed her business to reside in the country, having amassed a considerable fortune. Could I succeed to her place might we not again be independent? Will you do me the favor to break this subject to my father, who would be so surprised to hear it from me, that I should find myself wholly unable to repel his objections."

Too full of anxiety was my heart for my sanguine young friend, but I yielded to her wishes, and, as no time was to be lost, I hastened at once to acquaint Dr. Carver with the purpose of his daughter.

"Never!" exclaimed he, when I had finished my unpleasant task, "never shall my beloved child submit to this for me. Sooner, far sooner, would both her mother and myself become the recipients of public beneficence, than her gentle nature should be thus exposed to the toils—the anxieties—the heart aches incident to business! Oh, for myself alone, how cheerfully could I have borne all the visitations of Heaven; but for Mary and her!" Here the husband and father wept: "tears such as angels weep" gushed forth, pure and holy from the dross of earth, unstaining even manhood's cheek. The struggle within was

severe, but soon a thoughtful calmness settled upon his features, and I continued—

"You wish your daughter's happiness? Self-sacrifice for her parents sake—exertion for their comfort can alone secure it under present adverse circumstances. Forbidden to do this, she will yield to your wishes, but her spirit will prey upon itself and dwell unceasingly upon the sorrows that she believes herself able to alleviate. Consider the subject in all its bearings, and talk with Ada herself upon it."

Not many days had elapsed before I was again summoned to the former place of consultation, and, with tears of joy, Ada announced to me the final consent of her parents; and that by her father's permission she had applied to a dealer in fancy goods in New York, for such an amount of stock as she deemed sufficient to make a beginning in trade; the payment of which she hoped soon to be able to meet from the profits of her sales. The next day I accompanied Ada to town for the purpose of renting the store in question. The carriage landed us in a remote part of the city before a low, dingy looking dwelling, which we had learned was the residence of the landlord with whom we were to negotiate. Bell there was none, and the black, dusty knocker acknowledged to being seldom molested.

"Is Mr. Scrootz in?" inquired I, of the old dame who opened the door.

"I reckon he may be, and if ye will walk in I will find him." We were accordingly ushered into a room, whose obsolete and uncouth furniture told a tale of poverty or the miser's gain; the external symbols of each being similar. Presently, a little withered personage, in thread-bare broad-cloth, made his appearance, answering in all respects to the cognomen of Scrootz.

"Miss Carver," said I, "the daughter of Dr. Carver, and grand-daughter of the late Samuel Carver, of — street. You may have known him."

"Ah, yes! yes! fine old gentleman!—good property too—he and I knew each other right well, ha! ha!"

"This young lady," said I, anxious to spare my friend in this her first essay, "has called to make some inquiries respecting the store to be rented in — street, just vacated by Mrs. M."

"Ah, good situation that—fine place to make money—going to open a dry goods store, maam?"

"A store of fancy articles," was the almost inaudible answer.

"Well, well, Mrs. M. was an excellent tenant, paid rent very prompt—always expect to be paid the day the quarter ends, for I am in want of money, ye see."

Assuming some dignity, and repressing the indignation I felt at the remarks of this money-worshipper, I took it upon me to say that Miss Carver would punctually meet all her engagements; and after some further tedious conversation we withdrew, bearing with us the key that was to admit my poor friend to scenes untried.

In due time the store was fitted up and stocked with a variety of tasteful and elegant articles. Customers came, and were received by the new incumbent with that graceful ease and modest demeanor that are not more needful in the gay saloon than in the commerce

of business. From noon till night stood that fair young girl behind the counter, answering the busy and impatient demands of the numerous purchasers, wearing that calm dignity which conscious duty gives in every situation in life. The rich and fashionable tossed about the splendid goods, and murmured to each other their admiration of the beautiful girl before them—but none saw the vulture of anxiety preying upon her heart, or detected beneath the fair exterior the noble spirit that fainted not beneath its burden of self-sacrifice. A sufficient number of cash payments she daily received to meet all the wants of her parents as well as her own—reserving her large bills, which she had credited, for the payment of rent and stock in trade.

At length the day drew near in which she was to cancel her obligations to her landlord, and having had an insight into his character, as well as from an honorable desire on her own part to meet the demands against her punctually; she made out and intrusted to her collector several bills, the amount of which was absolutely necessary for her own engagements.

In one of the most sumptuous residences of — street were heard the glad voices of festivity and mirth. The gas-lights poured out their flood of glory, which was reflected from the golden cornices and a thousand glittering pendants, making its spacious and lofty saloons one scene of brilliant splendor. Through these floated fairy forms of surpassing loveliness, clad in rich vestures, where velvet and lace, pearls, diamonds and gold, were all laid under contribution to the handmaidens of beauty's queen. As Calypso among her nymphs, more proudly than all, moved with elegant bearing the mistress of that lordly home among her assembled guests. But from that gay assembly no thought was wafted forth to the world of suffering a large city encloses within its limits—the thousands whose *daily lot* is weariness and toil—the innumerable throng who are racked with physical suffering—with agony of mind or sad disquietude of heart—yea, "life's groaning tide" broke not upon that night's revelry, but every face was joyful and bright as if earth were still reposing in her Eden smile! On the morning of the day that was to end thus gaily, the graceful hostess had been called upon by Miss Carver's agent, who in the most civil manner possible made known to her that the person by whom he was sent, would be much obliged if she would settle the bill at that time.

"Good Lord, what an account is this?" exclaimed she, tossing her head disdainfully, "sure I am I have never had half of these articles, and who would have believed that such a person as I took her to be, would have had the want of principle to demand of me such exorbitant prices! Credit indeed! A pretty credit—not three months since I made the purchases. Please tell Miss Carver," said she, handing back the bill, "that I am very much engaged this morning, but will soon call and settle with her, and that she need have no fears of non-payment." And, turning away abruptly, the subject was from that moment forgotten in the tumult of worldly excitement. And yet this woman was not wholly heartless, but "evil is wrought by *want of thought* as well as *want of heart*." Could

she have seen the disappointment—the suffering occasioned by her refusal to pay a just demand, doubtless she might have allowed herself to be drawn a moment from her fancied urgent engagements, to listen to the pleadings of the voice within. But in the whirlpool of fashionable dissipation was she borne onward, and she, who had never known a want or a solicitude, that a full purse was not at hand to relieve, how should she know what human hearts can suffer for want of a pitance of that gold dust which she flung so lightly to the winds—or with what feelings of gratitude the poor receive even the tributes of justice. From this abode passed on our collector to many another mansion, bringing from them trifling sums or indefinite promises. Unfortunately, as the tale of his unsuccessful mission was falling upon Ada's ear, and an iron hand pressing heavily upon her heart, who should her eye rest upon but the scrawny figure of Scrootz, who with stealthy step had entered the store and overheard the conversation. With a quick perception of the scantiness of her finances, and without a particle of civility, which he never used save when it hung upon him like an ill-made garment in the presence of his superiors in wealth, this avater of mammon placing himself before her with an expression of merciflessness that would have awed a soul less firm than her own, he said—

"Well, Miss Carver, I believe I have not mistaken the day I was to call for my rent?—'spose its ready, eh?"

"I am sorry to tell you, sir, that it is not ready to-day—though I have made every effort for punctual payment, but if you will have the goodness to wait a few days it shall be left at your house."

"A few days, madam! If you will please tell me how much time that is, I will call again when it expires."

Ada faltered out, this day week, and when she raised her eyes found herself alone.

Wearily passed the sleepless hours of that long night to my poor friend. Sleep was courted in vain, or if for a brief season it weighed down her tearful eyelids, it brought into visions of sorrow—unsuccessful schemes and broken hopes. Yet God's equal eye looked down that night upon the bewildered votaries of pleasure, who drank her sparkling cup and feasted in her banquet halls, and on the lonely hearts and watchful eyes of adversity's stricken children! But on the evil and the good arose His new-created day, and with its returning light hope's golden beams broke in upon Ada's drooping spirit, and effort again strengthened her heart.

It was the day for the promised visit of the landlord, and Ada's exertions had enabled her to pay but a part of the demand, while a still heavier one had been made upon her by the firm of which she had purchased her stock. What was to be done? She felt that she had the means of honorably meeting all, but how render to others justice when justice was denied to her?

In this manner wore away a year of harrassing care, toil and suffering, known only to Him who readeth the book of human hearts! She had succeeded in finally satisfying her iron-hearted landlord, but the difficulty

she found in collecting her bills, together with several entire losses, had made it wholly impossible for her to keep her credit good with the mercantile house to whom she was indebted. More promptly might her payments have been made, could she have persuaded herself to borrow from any of the rich friends to whom her father's house had for so many years been hospitably open; but it is hard for the poor to ask pecuniary favors of the rich—it is sometimes harder for the rich to grant them. From her father Ada could no longer conceal the trials of her situation, who, disappointed as he was at the failure of efforts so nobly made, yet had he too much knowledge of the affairs of business to be surprised. By his advice and the embarrasments under which she suffered, she made preparations for closing her store and paying her creditors. She returned to her parents just with the world, but destitute of all wherewith to smoothen their passage to the grave. To retain their home was now impossible. To dispose of that and seek some humbler one adapted to their altered circumstances, was now the subject of their thoughts and efforts.

CHAPTER III.

Sweet are the uses of adversity, which, like the toad, Ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

At the United States Hotel was announced the arrival of a gentleman from Cuba. After dinner, in glancing over the morning papers, his eye met the advertisement of the sale of Dr. Carver's real and personal estate, which was to be held on the following day. Turning to a stranger who sat near him, he made sundry inquiries into the cause of the sale. The stranger discovering an interest in the inquirer, entered into the details of the family history—the misfortunes of the parents—the heroic efforts and generous self-sacrifice of the daughter.

The morning that was to see them deprived of all that had made home so lovely—yea, of that home itself, dawned sadly upon the inmates of the cottage. They had arisen at an early hour to make every preparation for a day so trying, and apparently for the last time in that domestic sanctuary, over which the "cherubim peace and love" had so long joined their spread wings, they united in prayer for strength equal to their trials and acquiescence in the will of Him who smites with a father's hand.

But to the great surprise and disappointment of the vast crowd who thronged the house, hoping to bear away at their own low estimate its beautiful and tasteful ornaments—not a single article was allowed to be removed from its place. A dark Spaniard looking gentleman was present, whom none knew, who had outbid on every article, and purchased it for himself. In the same manner had the real estate passed into his hands. Thus at the close of that day no change was perceptible in the cottage. It had only changed owners. The crowd dispersed, and the stranger lingered to meet the family. To Dr. Carver he introduced himself as the only surviving son of his elder brother. Born on the island of Cuba, to which his father had early attached his fortunes, he had hitherto known nothing of his uncle's family, except by the

occasional letters that had passed between the brothers. From these, however, he had learned to think of them with interest and affection, and now that his own family ties were sundered by the recent death of his widowed father, he had resolved to journey thither, hoping that a change of scene and the sympathy of kindred might soften the poignancy of his grief. Need I say how cordially he was welcomed?—how almost at once the interest of kindred seemed to ripen into the warmest and tenderest friendship?—how in heart-open communion, and the details of family vicissitudes, the night wore on unnoticed? When they separated at a late hour, the estate had again passed back to its former owner, the generous gift of a noble nature.

Each had sought the pillow of rest, but sleep came not. It flies impetuous joy as well as corroding grief. Young Carver believed he had found in his fair cousin his ideal of a perfect woman fully realized, and though he had known her but a few hours, yet these few hours had been active agents in lighting the torch of love within his soul. Ada's beauty, her intelligence, her winning manners and filial devotion had so won upon his heart, that he felt that God had now for him but *one* blessing, sufficient in itself for his happiness, deprived of which all others were poor!

And Ada! could she forget to be grateful? And is

not gratitude in woman's heart akin to love? And when, not long after, in one of her morning rambles, she found herself joined by him, whose generous and manly heart was henceforth to be her throne, and her ear drank in his impassioned vows of truthful affection, the deeper tinge on her cheek and tear-dimmed eye assured him that love's eloquent language needs no interpreter!

Since then the wheels of time have made many a revolution. Those who watched over her infancy and guided her youth have gently passed from their earthly home to a brighter one, where *change* comes not; while peace, affluence and happiness in all her relations have been the rich dowry of my friend. With courtly grace she moves in the circles of the great, and like an "earth-treading star" among that sacred class, *God's poor on earth*. From her own deep experience in the trials of affliction's children, she knows how to render *timely* aid to the needy, and to speak words of comfort and hope to the anxious heart. To one who was congratulating her on the elegant enjoyments of her lot, she replied, "far above all these do I value the practical lessons I learned in the 'Fancy Store,' far fearful is the gift of wealth with a heart thoughtlessly blind to those sufferings it is conferred upon us to relieve."

"EVIL INFLUENCES CORRUPT THE HEART."

ILLUSTRATED BY A FAIRY TALE OF FLOWERS.

BY FANNIE OF FARLEIGH.

How that bright fairy entered the apartment of the Lady Alice, no mortal can tell; for sometimes fairies glide on the moonbeams, or with their gossamer wings expanded are borne onward by the graceful zephyrs, far from their green and leafy homes in the wild wood. Or they freight with their tiny and fragile forms rich sea-shells, and with oars made of sparkling coral dash over the waves, so sportively that one might almost fancy them a happier race than their care-worn earth sisters.

Standing beside the Lady Alice, was one of the most beautiful of the dwellers in the fairy world. The glow on her cheek was like the delicate pink of the rose; her lips looked as though dyed in the red of the carnation; and her eyes sparkled like frozen dew drops. When she spoke, a strange and unearthly sensation thrilled the frame of her listener, and the tones of her voice seemed like Syren music distinctly heard, and dying away in the distance like the faint murmur of a wind harp.

"I have a warning for thee, lovely lady," whispered the fairy, "a sad tale to tell, of a withered rose that I watched and guarded; but alas! how vainly," and the beautiful fairy wept. By and bye she raised her head, and her words fell as gently upon the ear of the lady as the dew falls upon the flowers of eventide. "I planted the rose, and day by day it grew and expanded under my watchful care. Its luxuriant leaves were the freshest green, and the tender bud it ere long displayed gave promise of rare beauty. The sun loved to warm with its genial rays the tender thing that required such careful nursing—and the wind swept by it with a more gentle motion, as though lulling it to sweet slumber. At first it was alone, but it was cheerless and desolate even for the heart of a flower to be thus left without other companionship, than those whole sole care was to foster its loveliness. I tempted to transplant it to a gay parterre, where bloomed the lily and the acanthus, the woodbine and the wild-rose. Dost thou mark me, lady?"

But the Lady Alice was wrapped in thought, she had gone back to the fresh days of her early childhood, and remembered the time, when like a fair flower she was fostered and kindly cared for by one who loved her; and in the tale of the fairy she seemed to be reading something of her own history. She almost feared to hear again, the echoes of that silver voice, as once more it broke upon the hush and quietness of the lofty apartment, saying, "dost thou listen?"

The Lady Alice in token of assent inclined still lower the fair head, which was resting on her white and jeweled hand.

"Ah! woe the day!" the fairy continued; "my rose, that now more than ever required my protecting care, was of course more or less in the power of all the fairies, and some of the artfully disposed among them whispered that she was the fairest flower that bloomed in the garden, and that the lily and the acanthus were but pale, puny things compared to her. With deepest sorrow, I saw the bud listen to such traitorous words of the sweet lily, and sadly regretted the swelling pride that inflated it. But I resolved if possible to avert the evil of such contamination, by regarding it more closely than ever. The nightshade and the deadly poppy grew beside each other, not far from my favorite flower, and over them presided the wicked ones in whose breathe is blight and mildew and all poisonous vapors. 'Why,' said the poppy, 'dost thou not hold up thy head and meet the burning glances of the sun?—poor, pale thing! the delicate pink of thy leaves but illy compare with the glowing scarlet of mine. Even the lady-slippers outvie thee; and dost thou not see the coral honeysuckle attracts the butterfly and the bright plumaged humming-bird? while thou art unnoticed and uncared for? Thou wilt live neglected, if thou wilt droop thy head like the lily lives whose shyness is so awkward.' "And why," said I, 'should my beautiful one care for the butterfly who but sports among the flowers? Are there not human hearts to cheer with its fragrance and loveliness? Is there no fragile being whose perceptions quickened and etherealized by an approaching departure to the world of spirits, would cherish as a treasure gift from the hand of love, the perfume that dwells in the heart of a rose? It would illy repay me for my care, should my flower but bestow its sweetness on the bird, or sport with the butterfly only.' But ah! lady, woe that I should say the sorrowful words, my poor tempted rose listened to the evil councils of the poppy, and drank in the flattery of the nightshade when it praised the deeper crimson which was now apparent in its unfolding corolla:—and ere long I saw with deep regret that ugly thorns were beginning to appear on the heretofore smooth, soft stem, and that the tenderest and greenest leaves were covered with slime, left by the trail of noisome caterpillars, who fed on the poisonous juices the poppy distilled."

The Lady Alice wept. For she knew her own heart was once pure, and that by contact with idle flatterers and evil tongued sycophants she had become selfish and vain; and comparing herself to the rose it seemed as though these feelings were like the thorns, and pierced those who fain would have guarded her even as the fairy guarded it. But not yet had the fairy finished her story; a bright twilight

glow was in the apartment, and in the dimness she was almost invisible—yet still the Lady Alice heard her voice.

"I might yet have averted the evil," the fairy said, "could I have prevailed on my rose once more to yield to my influence only, for as I have said, having thrown her into that garden world, in which I knew it would one day be her lot to dwell, other spirits beside myself had power over her. But she resisted my entreaties, and at last as I looked into her heart more closely than was my wont, I saw therein a destroying worm. It was all over then. I knew the corrupt thing would eat out its freshness, and that blighted and fading she would lose all beauty, and die unnoted and uncared for."

Dimmer and more dim, grew the twilight in the apartment of the Lady Alice, until it gave place to the radiant light of the silver moonbeams. Still she moved not. The tale of the fairy had been to her as a written page of her own life. She too had gone out into the world, and day by day under its corrupting influences her heart had become the dwelling of discontent and selfishness; and like the worm, they were now feeding on its greenness and beauty. She had a better than a fairy watcher, a holier affection twined round her than the dream-fancy of a fairy—for her mother, a sinking consumptive, just without the portals of eternity, praying unceasingly that her own fair blossom might be spared the blight, which the breath of the *mar* worldling ever leaves, and from contact with such as these she would fain have shielded her. But alas! the work had begun, for strange to say, the Lady Alice was unthinking of her world's comfort. The sinking parent, left to the cold care of a hired menial, pined away her life, vainly

hoping for sympathy from the daughter she would have laid down her all to save. Would-be friends enticed Alice, by some promised pleasure from the bed-side of her mother, and carelessly would she utter the measured sentence—"is there anything I can do for you?"—ere she departed to while away her evenings in heartless gaiety, excusing herself on the plea that nurse was never forgetful or inattentive to the invalid. "Anything ye can do?" Ah! daughters, there is the kindly word that is better than medicine; there is sweet sympathy to a sick heart, that is more refreshing than the balm of healing. Seat yourself beside the couch of a weary invalid, and recalling pleasant retrospections of the past, see how the languid eye will brighten, and how the thoughts, drawn gradually from present suffering, will dwell on days gone by, and the hope will come—ye can trace it stealing like a faint illumination over the care-worn countenance—that buoyant health may once more give token of its presence. Is not this "*something to do*" for the sufferer? Is it not something to lay the cool palm of the hand, lovingly against the brow heated by fever? Or to wipe away the moisture, that like tear-drops gather there, heralding the approach of death? Tenderly, ah! tenderly as a ministering angel came that sweet, yet sorrowing fairy to teach this lesson to the Lady Alice. * * * * *

"Has she yet gone," faintly whispered the consumptive.

"Nay, I am here—ever with thee from henceforth, mother, dear mother!" And while a gush of penitent tears burst from her overcharged heart, the Lady Alice told her twilight dream. And the fairy that entered while she slept prompted the interpretation thereof.

THE INNKEEPER'S WIFE.

A STORY OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY JOSEPH B. COBB, ESQ., AUTHOR OF THE "MAID OF MELAS," &C. &C.

CHAPTER I.

In Prince Edward county, Virginia, within a short distance of the Court House, and a few miles only from Hampden Sydney College, stands a venerable edifice, known to this day as Moore's old Ordinary, or in Virginia parlance, *Or'nary*. Anterior to the War of the Revolution, and during the whole of that eventful struggle, it had been a favored resort of the travellers, and of the soldiers passing to or from the scene of action.

During the war, the proprietor of this ancient establishment was Major Joseph Moore, an Englishman by birth, but known throughout the struggle for independence as an unwavering and active whig, though holding no office in the army, or under Congress. In times of dismay and general misgiving, when the Old Dominion was crowded with hostile troops, and the wearied, half-famished troops of Greene and Lafayette were everywhere driven before their victorious arms—this old gentleman took heart of grace by greeting daily with his morning cup a miserably painted picture of Gen. Washington which adorned his parlor mantle, and encouraged his desponding neighbors by examples of daring and ceaseless activity in serving the good cause. He had provoked, to an irreparable extent, the vengeance of the British and Hessian officers, not only by adroitly eluding their most cautious searches, but by his zeal in forwarding provisions of food and clothing to the suffering troops of his adopted country. From the beginning, he had calculated the price of his adhesion to the colonial authorities, and bravely resolved to meet the issue of his patriotic decision by the sacrifice of all he owned, if such became necessary. Whilst his pursuers were in the neighborhood, he was often forced to take to the woods with his negroes and stock, where he would live for days and weeks in a large cave, the existence of which was known to none but staunch friends.

When it is told, that during these ever recurring absences, the young wife of this determined whig resolutely kept by her troubled board, steadily discharging her duties as mistress and landlady, it will easily be conjectured that she could have been none but an extraordinary woman, such as, in those days, stamped an undying influence on their neglected and underrated sex. The writer of this sketch recalls at this period with peculiar pleasure, not unmix'd with some pride, many a tale of the heroic fortitude and Spartan courage which distinguished his venerable ancestress, and charmed many an hour of his youthful days. She was emphatically a *woman of the Revolution*.

Unlike her husband, who was originally a ship-builder, she was well-born, and inherited an ample

fortune. In the earlier years of marriage she had to endure the reflection, not a little mortifying to her pride, of being thought wedded to a man rather beneath her station and pretensions. But after the war broke out, and laudations were showered on her husband for his indomitable exertions, both by his neighbors and by officers of the army who had experienced the benefit of his aid, all pompous clamor was silenced, and his station was considered suited to any family. Pope's famous couplet was never more strikingly illustrated than by his history.

"Honor and worth from no condition rise;
Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

The year 1781 was prolific in important events for American Independence, and Virginia was all anxiety. On one side she was held in terror by the haughty and ruthless Hessians under Sir Henry Clinton, expecting hourly invasion and devastation; whilst on the other, the fierce veterans of Cornwallis and the "invincible legion" of Tarleton threatened to crush all within their reach. Greene's army, that heroic column which had fought through all obstacles, and suffered and bled in utter despair of all relief; which had defied the discipline of British regulars, the pangs of famine, the fury of the elements, the pitiless severity of the seasons, naked and half armed, and had triumphed over all; this army, hotly pursued by Cornwallis, was in the neighborhood. In the very sight, and under the guns of their incensed enemy, they had crossed the Dan, and the whole country rang with shouts of exultation at the brilliant feat. The sturdy whig population of the surrounding counties poured out *en masse*, to relieve their wants in food, clothing and accoutrements. The expiring spark of patriotism was rekindled, and the torch of freedom and of the revolution burned with new vigor.

As may be supposed, these circumstances and their results, so well calculated to countervail the recent depression, which was vainly thought the prelude to universal dismay and submission, greatly exasperated the British leaders, and they wreaked vengeance in ways utterly repugnant to all rules of civilized warfare, and degrading to humanity. Houses were ransacked, beds ripped open, furniture spoiled, and provisions and property destroyed without discrimination and without mercy. Parties were sent to scour the country, who scrupled not to murder or imprison the men, and to insult the women. It was a time for the daughters of America to summon all their fortitude; for husbands, fathers and brothers, unprepared to provide for or protect them under the rapid assaults and sudden onsets of the British cavalry, were forced without choice or remedy, to leave them to what

meagre courtesy and forbearance their sex, or their situation could extract from their fierce invaders. Nor did woman's fortitude and courage fail or flinch in these appalling emergencies.

Now it so happened, that on a cold night in the year above named, whilst our family at the Ordinary were quietly seated around the cheerful fireside, engaged doubtless in recounting the stirring news developed at each day's close, a negro who had been on the look out, entered breathless and trembling, with the unwelcome and ever terrifying announcement, that "the red coats under Tarleton were in the neighborhood, and might ride up at any moment." All was instantly alarm and confusion. The wife refused to sleep in such suspense, and bracing herself against the depressing effects of unnecessary fear, actively abetted her husband in his preparations for flight. In a short time all was ready, and filled with melancholy presages, the husband and wife bade a silent adieu, each resolved to encounter with firmness their respective duties and difficulties. Not a living thing which could lay claim to the name of property was left on the premises, if we except an old negro and his wife who volunteered to remain with their mistress. But the provisions which had been stored away for the American troops, and for the accommodation of such travellers as might venture abroad in these times of gloom and terror, were left exposed; and the spacious cellar was filled with barrels of peach brandy, distilled at home, and carefully reserved for the same purposes. To save a portion of these was now the most anxious object with Mrs. Moore—to save all was entirely out of the question. In view of her slender resources, she instantly resolved to leave the cribs and granaries to fate as they might, and directed her whole thoughts and means to the preservation of her stores in the cellar. She at once calculated that the whole troop would be breakfasted at her expense, and this she resolved to offer with cheerfulness. Unprovided with means of transportation, it could hardly be supposed that cavalry would or could carry away more than would answer temporarily, being so far too from the main body of the army. To prevent destruction of what was left, was, therefore, the important question. She was sure that the liquor could not escape, and in daily expectation that Colonel Washington would be passing, (who was attempting to check the rapacity of the enemy) she was most anxious to preserve full rations for his weary and patriotic band.

Leaving her children to the care of the faithful negress, she descended, candle in hand, accompanied by her servant, to the cellar beneath. Within this was an apartment back, divided by a thick wall, and to which no light was admitted. Here was always stored the brandy, which, thus secured, was left to mellow and to purify. Her excellent sense at once suggested that this secluded stronghold, together with the pleasant and captivating *effluvia* which exuded from its every crack or crevice, would be most sure to attract, and probably *distract* the attention of the robbers who were shortly expected. Applying the key to the iron-faced door, which looked as though it might resist the strongest efforts if stormed, she

directed the astonished servant to roll out a number of the choice barrels. These she strewed in different parts of the open room, taking care to conceal them partially by carelessly throwing over them pieces of hoops and staves or mill-dewed straw, in such manner as to create the impression that they were nothing more than heaps of useless rubbish. After the same fashion she also adroitly disguised several barrels of pork and flour, to guard against contingencies. This, though simple in every particular, was a remarkable instance of self-possession in a matron not much exceeding the age of twenty-five, and so perilously situated. Having done all she could do, and again locking the door, she put the key in her basket and re-entered her chamber. Her children were quietly sleeping on their pallet, and anxious but resolved, she lay down undressed by their side, not to sleep, but to await the event, as became a wife, a mother, and a woman of America.

CHAPTER II.

TRUE to his accustomed activity, by early dawn on the day following, Tarleton had broken up his bivouac, and before the sun mounted over the surrounding hills, was on his march for the Ordinary. A dense fog covered the whole space around, and his approach was known only from the rumbling echo of hoofs as the squadron galloped over the frozen ground. Foremost came a corporal with his advanced guard, to make known the orders of his imperious and fierce commander. Early as was the hour, Mrs. Moore had prepared her plan of action, and as the officer entered, unasked and unannounced, was sitting before a huge log fire which blazed in the parlor corner, calmly engaged with her knitting as though peril and insult were not near. On his entrance she rose, but offered no salute or invitation, and the rough soldier swaggered to the fire, where standing with his back to its cheerful blaze, a skirt of his coat hanging from each arm, he thus accosted the matron in the rude and discourteous style so common at that time with the British troops.

"Well, madam, where is the infernal old rebel who keeps this house? Answer me quick, for by —, I'm in no humor for dainty mouthing and silly scenes."

"What mean you, sir?" answered Mrs. Moore, who by the bye was blessed with a full share of temper when excited, as well as spirit to maintain it. "I am not in the habit of hearing or replying to such beastly language."

"You ask what I mean," said the corporal. "I will tell you that I mean your husband, or whatever you are to the rebellious traitor, whose name hangs on yonder sign. If we can lay hands on him, I'll try and raise his head by the side of his name, and ask of you no further aid than the loan of a strong bed cord." And pointing to the beam on the sign-post, he made a significant motion with his hand about his neck, which left no doubt as to the allusion.

This insult, so stinging and so unprovoked, drew an involuntary tear to the eye of the helpless woman, but wisely subduing any appearance of the kind in such company, she turned her back on the ruffian, and walked into her chamber.

At this moment the full, mellow sound of a bugle awakened the echoes of hill and dale, and the whole troop appeared in sight at the head of the lane. The rising sun had dispelled in part the thick mist of the morning, and from a window of her room the lady could catch glimpses of their shining armor as they rapidly advanced. Presently they galloped full into the yard, and the corporal walked out to meet them.

A towering, stalwart officer, clad in the splendid uniform of a British dragoon, dismounted from his charger, and after exchanging a word with the corporal, advanced toward the doorway, making the oaken floor of the long gallery in front to ring with the clang of his iron-beeled cavalry boots. The huge roan steed, the long, brown hair, and the frightful marks of small-pox which disfigured his otherwise comely face, told at once who this officer was, and, agreeable to the plan she had formed, Mrs. Moore, having a little girl by the hand, and an infant boy in her arms, met him promptly at the hall door.

"Colonel Tarleton, I presume," she said, with a graceful curtesy.

"At your service, madam," was the prompt reply of that celebrated officer. And as he touched the rim of his dragoon cap, he responded to the offer of the lady by seating himself with somewhat of the same familiarity which had distinguished his sub-officer before the parlor fire.

Fierce and unrelenting, though always roughly courteous, the British commander was nevertheless struck with the calm dignity, the stately manner, and somewhat aristocratic demeanor of his landlady, and could not reconcile her appearance with the generally received notions of an innkeeper's wife.

"Pon honor, madam," said he, "I must say you have there two likely, nice little folks," and offering his hand to the little girl, who readily took it, he at the same time slightly caressed the boy in the mother's arms. With staring eye and trembling lip, the infant pertly struck the hand which he extended, and hid its head in the folds of the mother's shawl.

"Oh, ho," laughed Tarleton, "some of the old heaven, I see. The red is too strong for his little blue eyes, I suppose, hey, madam," winking knowingly at the mother. "By the way, madam, does the father of this fiery little rebel always leave you to do the honors of his tavern! His faith is tolerably strong considering your age and comeliness. Come, my good madam, tell me, have you locked him in the closet, hid him in the cuddy, or stuffed him under the bed? He has served his mob Congress, and his rebel leaders well enough to receive some attention at my hands."

"I am happy to say, sir," returned the lady, "that my husband is beyond your reach, and I decline for him the attentions you speak of. As to whether I have placed him where you suggest, I presume you will soon find when you commence your usual round of forcing locks, tearing open beds, and burning houses."

"For George, madam, a proper answer from a rebel's wife to an officer in his majesty's service!" said Tarleton, with a mixture of humor and mock severity of tone. "And what if I should do all you

have said, how can these daring and obstinate rebels complain who put his majesty to such trouble! Make yourself easy, my good hostess, but I have now no time to parley or play at cross questions with a spirited dame. Work is before me, and work is always first with those under my orders."

At this instant the corporal again entered, and, lifting his cap, approached to where his officer and the lady were sitting. At the sight of her insulter, Mrs. Moore could not repress a slight exclamation. She started back, whilst the fire of injured feeling and outraged delicacy burned in her lustrous eyes, and suffused with a deep crimson hue the cheeks just now pallid almost from the reflection in whose dread presence she stood. All these were not unobserved by the quick glance of Tarleton, who, beyond doubt, had felt his chivalry awakened by the manner and spirit of the woman before him.

"Pray, what is the matter, madam?" he asked. "And what causes you such feeling at the sight of my officer?"

Unabashed, and nerved by the full flow of resentment which lurks in woman's bosom when smarting beneath the rankling of insult and outrage, Mrs. Moore recounted with feeling emphasis the gross language and the offensive allusion which had aroused and embittered her feelings as a wife and mother. As she proceeded, the rigid frown which contracted the brow of Tarleton, and the fury which sparkled from his fierce glance, told that woman had found a protector, and sent a cold shudder to the heart of the brutal offender.

When asked if he admitted the fact, the trooper could not articulate, so firmly had fear and conscious guilt clenched his teeth; and when, in the rage of passion, and with the full sway of a British commanding officer, Tarleton strode forward and struck him, the soldier covered and shrank beneath the blow like a slave. This was not all. Tarleton caused him to unclasp his sword-belt, and then breaking the weapon before his face, ordered him to the rear under arrest.

These facts being substantially true, serve to relieve in some measure the odium which is generally heaped on the name and memory of this distinguished, though cruel Briton. On this occasion he certainly behaved as a gallant and high-souled officer, jealous of the reputation of his service, though his harsh and summary chastisement of the offender in the presence of a lady, a scene so unsuited to female softness and delicacy, showed in a strong view that impulsive and fierce disposition so characteristic of the man.

This being done, Tarleton resumed his natural humor, and proceeded with his inquiries, as though nothing of an unusual character had happened. And indeed such scenes in the British army, which in the French or American service would have aroused a hurricane of resentment among the junior officers and privates, were by no means uncommon, and account in part for the Russian dispositions of the soldiery when unchecked by rigid discipline.

"Now, madam," said Tarleton, "since it seems I shall not now have the pleasure of conducting your husband as a prisoner of war to my commanding

officer, I must trouble you to breakfast my squad with a portion of these dainty supplies, which doubtless your good man has left to be distributed to the rebel army, who know so much better how to run than how to fight."

"Do they indeed?" said the matron, emboldened to satire, perhaps, by the consciousness of being in a gentleman's power, and not that of a ruffian, as he had been represented. "Doubtless we poor Americans have been duped by false rumors; but a few weeks since we had news that his majesty's troops fully equalled them in the first, whilst our poor soldiers proved their knowledge of the last quite to the satisfaction of Cornwallis and his officers."

"Ah, you allude to that ridiculous, helter skelter affair at your Cowpens," answered Tarleton, no way confused. "Well, madam, I did my part, as you doubtless heard, and his lordship hopes soon to get this mob enclosed in *pens* something more substantial than where we last had them."

"Report says," retorted the lady, now cruel in turn, "that we have an officer in the American ranks who does not much dread close quarters in the battle, even though he finds himself face to face with a very redoubted adversary."

"Zounds, madam, you tempt me to anger by such a ridiculous tirade," answered he, somewhat moved, though not out of humor. "If ever I can get sight of this namesake of your old rebel chief, I will leave on him a mark by which he can boast to some effect of an encounter."

"In that case," again said the lady, archly smiling, "you and he, from what we hear, will be then fairly at quits, for it is said he has already balanced that score."

The latter part of this conversation is given on testimony not considered altogether reliable in our courts of judicature, though if the report, which has since received the sanction of history, be true, that Tarleton had lost his fingers in a hand to hand fight with Colonel Washington, it is fairly presumable that the rumor was then rife. On this occasion he was gloved and booted, as already remarked, and the wound, if ever inflicted, was not of course visible.

CHAPTER III.

THE troop dismounted and arranged to cook and eat their breakfast in the open yard, Tarleton and a few of his higher officers only, partaking their meal in the hall under the invitation and superintendence of their inexplicable hostess. Whilst engaged in discussing, with great apparent pleasure, the substantial repast spread out before them, it is said that Tarleton, with a species of blunt politeness peculiar to him, asked "if he could get a cup of tea."

"A cup of tea!" answered Mrs. Moore. "Colonel Tarleton surely forgets that he is breakfasting with the wife of an American patriot. In these times, too, we have no means of transporting hither the waters in Boston harbor, and they are the only specimen of the article you wish, we have had in this country for many years past."

At this tart but good humored sally, the young officers at table laughed outright, despite the presence

of their commander, whose rude and severe notions of loyalty and discipline were understood to be generally averse to the least levity as regarded the course of his superiors, or the action of his government. After gravely rebuking them on this occasion, he replied to the lady of the house in his usual tone, half earnest, half humorous—

"Well, my dear madam," said he, "I only wish those savages had maintained their disguise long enough to allow his majesty's troops an opportunity of tinging the tea of Boston harbor with the color so obnoxious to you Americans. Their blood would have answered the purposely admirably. The Ethiopian may not change his skin, but savages sometimes have been known to do the like, especially when their color was likely to cost them dear."

Breakfast was finished, and the bugle sounded the assembly. The officers were at their respective posts, but Tarleton still remained by the fireside. The troopers were all paraded in line in front of the house, when, at an order from the sergeant, every tenth man dismounted, leaving his horse in charge of his right file. These formed the search corps, a system of domiciliary which was never neglected by Tarleton in these official military visits.

Through the open door the lady of the house had seen this movement, and understood at once its object. Under the direction of the sergeant, this corps filed off toward the lots where the corn, fodder, and various provender were collected and stored. On their return, they seized upon the old negro man and ordered him to conduct them to the store room of the Ordinary and to the cellar. The first of these, like the various houses just left, were noted down in the sergeant's memorandum book. Arrived at the cellar, the sergeant himself led the way. He approached the apparent heaps of rubbish, and with his foot kicked off some of the top coverings, but as the old servant began to dread the failure of his mistress' plan, the keen eye of the soldier was attracted to the iron-faced door of the locked cellar, and followed by his companions, he sprang forward with undisguised ecstasy. But to force it was no easy matter, and the keys were in possession of the landlady. The savoury smell of the brandy excited the keenest appetite, and a most unconquerable thirst. They resolved on a report to the chief, whose influence, it was hoped, might obtain the keys, and thus prevent the delay, which none relished, and the necessity, which was, from appearances, by no means inviting, of resorting to force. The report was made, and Tarleton peremptorily demanded the keys. The lady replied that she would never surrender them willingly, and gave the chieftain to understand that if he obtained the keys, which she displayed from her girdle, he must get them as he could.

Tarleton disdained to use compulsory or ungallant means with a lady of such undoubted pretensions, and ordered the sergeant to take men and what materials he could gather, and break open the door which locked in the precious viands, most precious of all things to the soldier.

He himself superintended the work, and from motives of seeking her safety in his presence, as well as

a natural anxiety, Mrs. Moore, attended by her children, went along with him. This work consumed an hour or two, which rendered the British officer restive and impatient, especially when he reflected that the delay might be saved by a slight severity, which he had not often scrupled to practice. His men were astonished at this relaxation, and an officer was heard swear, "that he believed the colonel was smitten with the comely appearance and lofty spirit of the rebel dame."

At length, after vigorous efforts, the door gave way, and the barrels lay before them. Tarleton gave orders to have his men served each with a heavy ration, and their canteens filled. This done, he unhesitatingly caused his men to break open the heads of such as remained over, and the floor of the cellar was flooded in an instant. Mrs. Moore looked on silently, but with ill-repressed indignation, which Tarleton failed not to notice.

"The rules of war are severe, my good madam," said he, "but you rebels leave us no choice. This liquor has been saved with great labor, and doubtless for other purposes, but my orders are to anticipate and provide against such purposes."

"I expected no better," replied the lady, "and perhaps I had best prepare for worse."

"That you will soon find out, madam," was the pithy reply, and the stern veteran bowed and re-conducted his fair companion to the upper story. The sergeant now presented his memorandum, and after some conversation between the two, Tarleton turning to the lady, observed, "my officer returns me herewith a schedule of your stock of provisions, which I am ordered either to seize, or cut off from the rebel army. I have levied enough already to answer present purposes, but you must give me your word of honor not to apply these to the wants of the Americans, else I shall proceed with my duty."

"Then proceed," said the lady, firmly, "for I assure you that I shall make no such promise."

"Madam, this promise can cost you nothing," said the officer, evidently reluctant to resort to severity. "If I destroy them, the rebels cannot get them, and they lose nothing."

"I am not insensible to what you say," returned the lady, "and I acknowledge my obligation to you for one instance of courtesy. If you cannot spare us further losses and destruction, I regret it, but I cannot purchase your forbearance by the sacrifice of my duty to my husband and countrymen."

This heroic speech closed the parley, and threw, at once, all to the discretion and decision of the British chieftain. He cast around his officers an inquiring

and somewhat perplexed glance. Their expression could not be mistaken, and he resolved to err for once on the side of forbearance.

"Sergeant, form the line, and prepare for marching," he sharply exclaimed. "And now hearken, madam; I shall leave your property untouched, after having exacted our meal, and let loose the brandy barrels, and you may boast hereafter of having done what no man has succeeded in doing, and that is, having turned Lieutenant Colonel Tarleton, of his majesty's dragoons, from the proper course of his purpose."

Having thus said, he strode forth from the room and called for his charger. Gratified at her success in preserving the brandy disguised in the front cellar, and touched with the unexpected courtesy from an officer so usually unrelenting, one other idea still occurred to the sagacious reflections of this calculating woman. This was that stragglers might return, and in the absence of officers, destroy what was left, and subject her to renewed outrage. She took her resolution in a moment, and just when Tarleton was in the act of stepping forth to mount his horse, she gently tapped his elbow, and requested that an officer might be permitted to remain until the troop had gone far enough to prevent the occurrence she apprehended.

"Madam," said he, "I do not feel authorized to detail any officer on a duty which might prove one of great danger, and not known to the service. I shall take pains to guard against what you apprehend; but if any one chooses to volunteer in your favor, I shall not prohibit him from so doing." A young lieutenant immediately rode out and tendered his services.

"Very well," said Tarleton again. And gracefully waving his sword in adieu, he turned and galloped to his usual post at the head of the troop. The bugle sounded, the word "march" was passed along the line, and wheeling into sections with most elegant precision, the imposing array moved off. In a very few moments more the last of the "invincible legion" disappeared in the distance, and the solitary dragoon officer sat down in the parlor of the Ordinary to meditate on the probable dangers of his situation.

But these dangers were only imaginary, for his grateful hostess heard in a few weeks after he left her, that he had reached Tarleton in safety, and participated in the obstinate and bloody fight at Guilford Court House, which resulted so gloriously to the American army, and so effectually broke up the boasted and well planned campaign of the British general.

THE FOREST HOME

BY MRS. HUGHES, AUTHOR OF "ORNAMENTS DISCOVERED," "AUNT MARY'S TALES," &C. &C.

CHAPTER I.

"HERE we are, Mary!" said Eloise Deland, to her cousin Mary Woodville, as they seated themselves near the table of a well-stored library, after an absence from home of some weeks, "once more we are in our own dear home! And after all, though we are so far up in the back-woods, I believe this is as pleasant a place as any I have yet seen."

"I certainly would not change 'Forest Home' for any home that I ever saw," returned the cousin.

"Bless me! What can this be?" exclaimed Eloise, taking up a letter which lay before her on the table, with her father's address on the back. "The handwriting is strange to me, and yet it cannot be from any of pa's clients, for he is so particular about keeping all his business papers in his office," and as she spoke, with all the confidential familiarity that existed in the family, she opened and read the letter. "Why, Mary!" she continued, "who can this Mr. Charles Loraine be that is lauded and glorified in this manner to pa, by some gentleman in England! Do read, and see what a wonderful youth is come amongst us!"

"He must be a perfect paragon," returned Mary, after reading the letter. "But I wonder how it happens that we have never yet seen or heard anything of him."

"Oh! I suppose he has seen too much, and travelled too far, to think of coming to pay his respects to two back-woods girls, whom he probably expects to find without shoes or stockings, and sitting down, according to the fashion of the country, to arrange our hair as soon as he enters."

"After having seen the other members of the family, he would hardly expect to find us such accomplished characters as that," returned Mary, laughing. "But here comes your mother, who will tell us all about him. Pray, aunt!" she continued, addressing Mrs. Deland, who just then entered the room, "who is this extraordinary Mr. Charles Loraine?"

"I can only say," replied Mrs. Deland, "that if you have read that letter, you know pretty nearly as much of him as we do, except that he appears to be, in every respect, worthy of the encomiums that are bestowed on him."

"But why did none of you tell us anything about him?" asked Eloise. "Beaux are not as thick as blackberries here, that you should forget to give us so important a piece of information."

"That you may set down to Adelaide's account! Attaching all the importance to such an event that a girl of fourteen is likely to do, she bound your papa, myself and Theodore to secrecy on the subject, and has enjoyed, exceedingly, the idea of your surprise when you met."

"I mean to throw my spell over him at once," said Eloise.

"You had much better try for his friend," returned her mother, who was always ready to join in a harmless joke.

"What! are there two of them?" exclaimed the daughter.

"Yes! Mr. Ellison, a handsome young man of large fortune, is a much more important personage in the eyes of our young ladies here about, than Loraine is; for the latter is not wealthy, though as a very skilful engineer he must always be considered independent."

"Well then, Eloise," said Mary, laughing, "as you intend to throw out your nets for the engineer, I think I had better try for the fortune. It would certainly be very convenient to get a rich husband to fill up all deficiencies." In this manner these two lively girls who had never yet tasted sorrow, amused themselves in disposing of the expected beaux, though perhaps scarcely any girls of their age, with so many charms to attract the fluttering train, cared in reality so little for their presence.

Eloise was the second child of Mr. and Mrs. Deland, who had only two others:—a son, Theodore, a youth of about nineteen years of age, who was studying law with his father; and another daughter Adelaide, who as a girl of fourteen was too unformed to admit of description; though her amiable disposition and pleasing manners, and, more especially, her devoted attachment to her father, made her a great favorite with all her relatives. But Eloise appeared to have engrossed all the beauty of the family, and was, perhaps, as perfect and lovely as can well be imagined. Her luxuriant flaxen hair, transparent skin, with the delicate flush of health coloring her cheeks, coral lips surrounded by laughing dimples, and her large, full, bright blue eyes, were all exquisite, and as her manners were easy and graceful, though exceedingly playful, no one could accuse her of presumption, however high an object she might mark for conquest. Yet beautiful as she was, she was not without a rival, and one, before whom, in the estimation of most beholders, even her charms had to give way. Mary Woodville, the portionless orphan child of Mrs. Deland's sister, was of the same age as Eloise, and they had been brought up together from the time that they were only a year old; and so closely had they ever been united, that they had appeared, to use the words of Shakspeare,

"Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
 But yet an union in partition."

Their minds, however, were very dissimilar. Conscious of her beauty, and fully sensible of the power with which it and no ordinary share of talent invested her, Eloise seemed as if born to rule, not, however, with an iron rod, but by the influence of winning

fullness and fascinating smiles. But though so fully disposed to estimate her own advantages, not a shade of jealousy ever darkened her countenance toward her cousin. On the contrary, she was always delighted to hear any one expatiate on Mary's beautifully formed hazel eye, shaded by their long, dark silken lashes, her skin of alabaster whiteness, only appearing more conspicuously pure as contrasted with the rich glow that suffused her cheeks, the perfectly formed mouth, the graceful neck—in short the harmony, we had almost said sublimity of her whole form; which bespoke in every look and motion a mind equally faultless, and which when seen made all other objects sink into the shade; yet could Eloise hear all these beauties spoken of, not only with an unclouded brow, but with a glow of pleasure that gave additional charms to her own face.

CHAPTER II.

"WHAT frock do you intend to wear, Mary?" asked Eloise, one afternoon as they were dressing for an evening party, about two weeks after their return.

"I think we had best put on our new mouslin-de-laines," replied her cousin, "for as the horses are all engaged, your pa says we must walk, and those dresses will be less liable to be injured than any others that we can wear."

"Oh! no!" returned Eloise, "I want to wear my painted muslin, for I mean to do great execution, this evening."

"And the first proof of your power, will be the execution of your poor frock, for it is so very thin and delicate, that the probability is it will be torn to tatters before you get through the woods."

"I expect to catch the beaux with it at all events, so that it will only be putting it a little in practice before hand," was Eloise's laughing reply, and as she spoke she took the dress in question out of the wardrobe.

"You surely are not serious about wearing that frock, Eloise!" remonstrated Mary, as she saw her cousin preparing to put it on. "Only consider the kind of road we have to go!"

"I shall put mine on, certainly," said Eloise, in a tone that proved to Mary, who knew her so well, that her mind was made up. "But you can wear whatever you please, you know."

"Oh! I shall wear the same as you do, whatever it may be, as your ma wishes us always to be dressed alike; but I wish, dear Eloise! I could prevail upon you to wear any other frock, than this very delicate one."

"I am determined," said Eloise, and on went the disputed dress. Mary's was also put into requisition, and they set out at a very early hour, as they had a long walk to take. Theodore would gladly have persuaded them to wait for him, as he was not quite ready; but they said they wished to have time to walk slowly.

Eloise joked merrily, as she went, about the mischief she meant to do with her beautiful frock, when, on coming to a very narrow path, where they

were obliged to walk in Indian file, as they called it, Eloise, with her frock wrapt close around her to avoid its being caught by the brambles and briars, was going first, when on a sudden Mary rushed forward, and catching hold of her, pulled her back with her whole strength. At the same instant the sound of Mary's frock, tearing down from the waist to the hem, was heard, whilst an almost total divorce took place between the skirt and the body.

"What in the world has possessed you, Mary?" cried Eloise, in extreme astonishment. "Have you lost your own wits instead of putting some luckless wight out of his?"

"Look! look!" cried Mary, as she still held her cousin in firm grasp.

Eloise turned at this exclamation and saw Mary's usually coral lip pale and quivering, whilst her eyes seemed almost ready to start from their sockets.

"Look! look!" she repeated, scarcely able to articulate, and pointing, as she spoke, to something before them.

Eloise, at this, followed the direction indicated, and beheld a large rattlesnake lying across the road, on the very spot where she herself had been about to set her foot.

"Well!" said Eloise, "I have escaped the danger, but your poor frock has fallen the sacrifice."

"Oh!" cried Mary, still pale and trembling with the thought of what might have been. "How can you talk of a frock at such a time!"

"Because," returned her companion, "the one is only what might have been, and the other, what is."

"And what are a thousand tattered frocks in comparison to the danger you have escaped?"

"And can you talk in this way after my being so self-willed!" said Eloise, in a tone of self-reproach.

Before Mary had time to answer Theodore came up, and, seeing the cause of their alarm, by means of a thick club succeeded in killing the dangerous reptile, after which, as is usual on such occasions, he cut off the rattle as a trophy of his prowess. This done, and Mary's composure on the death of the enemy being restored, the attention of all three was turned to the tattered garment. For Mary to proceed in the state her dress was in was impossible, nor was it much more practicable for her to return to change it, and afterward to pay the visit, for this would take too much time.

After some consultation, it was determined, at Theodore's suggestion, that they should wait where they were, only taking care, as Eloise said, neither to sit nor step upon rattlesnakes, till he ran home and brought Mary another dress.

"Then," said he, archly, "you may easily find a dressing-room under the thick branches of some tree, and for a mirror you can never be at a loss whilst you have Eloise's eyes so near you."

"Very well said, my brother," replied the lively girl, with pretended gravity. "I admire both the courtesy and discrimination you display, and am happy to think Mary has so gallant a knight to assist her in the unhappy dilemma into which my wish to shine in envied splendor has involved her."

Things being thus arranged, they sought for and

soon found a safe and comfortable seat, and Theodore proceeded on his mission.

CHAPTER III.

"HERE comes Theodore, trotting on a great cart horse!" cried Eloise, laughing, as the form of her brother appeared through the trees. "Where in the world did you meet with that noble steed?" asked she, as he came up to them.

"I borrowed it of Ned Winfield," replied the young man. "I prevailed on him to stop his ploughing till I brought the frock. And now I will return with my Rosinante while Mary is equipping herself." So saying, he handed Mary a parcel neatly pinned up in a napkin. He was scarcely out of sight, however, before they both at once uttered a loud exclamation, for, on unpinning the parcel, Mary found instead of the dress she had sent for, an old rusty black one, which she scarcely ever wore.

"What can be the meaning of this?" cried Eloise. "Some of the girls have been playing a trick upon you."

"Oh, no!" returned Mary, who never upon any occasion formed a severe judgment; "it is only a mistake. None of them, I am sure, would intentionally serve me so. But never mind! Worse things might happen than for me to make my appearance in an old frock."

"You surely would not think of going in this forlorn looking thing!" remonstrated Eloise.

"I shall certainly not deprive myself of the visit on account of it," returned her companion. "The thing can soon be explained to Louisa, and she will take good care to make the why and the wherefore known to all her guests."

"I would not appear in a party with such a dress for the world," said Eloise, with energy.

"Then you do yourself great injustice, dear Eloise," said Mary, looking at her cousin affectionately; "for believe me, when you appear your dress will be the last thing that is thought of, even were it of sack-cloth."

"Oh! that would only make me appear the more interesting," returned Eloise, laughing, "for then I should be the 'Fair Penitent.' But only suppose, Mary, that the two English strangers were to be there. How would you feel then?"

"Exactly as I should feel if they were not there. Do you imagine I would value the opinion of any one, who could think either ill or well of me, on account of an article of dress merely?"

"Yes! If your dress were such as to give them the idea of your being a slattern."

"That opinion could scarcely be formed by any reasonable person. The singularity of my attire will, at once, prove it to be accidental."

"I believe, Mary," said Eloise, looking steadily in her cousin's face, "you are not quite the humble being we have always taken you for. I suspect, after all, you have your fair proportion of pride."

"There is a pride, Eloise, that I consider it the duty of all to encourage. We can have but a small portion of self-respect if we do not feel ourselves

superior to the little adventitious circumstances of dress. But come!" she continued, with a smile, "I am delivering a moral lecture instead of—"

"Instead of acting one," interrupted her cousin, "which after all is the most impressive mode of teaching. Even ma's gentle remonstrance has frequently had less effect on me, than the sight of you quietly proceeding in the right course. I only wish I had possessed a little more of the right sort of pride this afternoon, and this walk would not have proved so unfortunate."

"Well! Let us now try to get to the end of it," said Mary, who had changed her dress and folded up her tattered frock.

They had not gone far before they were overtaken by Theodore, whom they questioned closely about the mistake that had been made. He said that when he reached home, he found that his mother and Adelaide, as well as Susanna, the girl that had the care of the chambers, were all out. He had, therefore, given a young girl, who had only been in the family a short time, the best directions he was able about finding the frock that was wanted, and particularly charged her to pin it neatly up, and as he found she had paid strict attention to the last part of his injunctions, he took it for granted that the rest was equally well executed, and gave himself no further thought on the subject.

They soon arrived at their place of destination, where they found a large party already assembled. Their adventure was told to their friend Louisa, who had slipped into the dressing-room to give them a more cordial welcome than she could have done in the parlor, and, after laughing over the catastrophe, she returned to her company to take off a little of the formality that generally reigns during the early part of the evening, by detailing the particulars to each of her visitors in turn, when we believe we may venture to say that there was more pleasure than sympathy felt on the occasion. Indeed there were few present who would not have considered it a happy circumstance for themselves, if anything had occurred to cast the beautiful Mary somewhat into the shade. However never before did she look more strikingly, more sublimely beautiful.

Soon after the formalities of tea were despatched, the gentlemen began to flock in. Louisa immediately hastened to the piano. As she touched the keys, and a favorite air resounded, a space in the centre of the room was cleared, and dancing commenced. Eloise who was always ready to join in the dance, was one of the first to be led out; but though frequently solicited, Mary declined, for she felt a little fatigued with her walk, and had besides, in consequence of her fright, a slight headache. Disposed to escape from the noise and heat of the room, she took Louisa's arm, when the latter gave place to another performer, and proposed going into the next apartment, where a centre-table stood covered with annuals, magazines and prints. Louisa, who was exceedingly attached to Mary, was delighted with the opportunity of having a little quiet conversation with her, and remained as long as her duty to her other visitors would permit. When obliged to go, she placed a

book before her friend, which contained a number of beautiful views of various parts of Europe. Much amused, Mary had sat a long time undisturbed, except by some gentleman occasionally trying to persuade her to join the dancers, or a gay belle who came to say she was dying of heat, yet who yielded a ready assent to the first youth who invited her back to encounter the same miseries; when happening accidentally to look up, she saw a strange gentleman standing in the entry, but directly opposite to her, with his eyes fixed upon her with the most intense earnestness. Mary immediately suspected him to be one of the young Englishmen. He could hardly be said to be above the middle size, but the graceful proportions of his person took off all appearance of deficiency in height. His complexion, though rather dark, was peculiarly clear and bright, and his fine dark eye beamed with a union of softness, intelligence and spirit. His nose and mouth were well formed; his teeth remarkably white; and his chin, of itself handsome, was just so much divested of its dark glossy covering as to display an exquisitely formed dimple, that seemed to have been placed there for the little God of Love to rest in, and laugh away the hearts of all who ventured to look at him. As Mary raised her head their eyes met, and in an instant hers again sought the picture that lay before her, but scarcely had she time to ask herself which of the strangers this could be, when Louisa entered the room, and begged permission to introduce Mr. Charles Loraine. As every species of affectation was a stranger to Mary's bosom, she received him with easy courtesy; and he being too much a man of the world to have any difficulty in drawing her out, especially when aided by the pictures before her, they were soon engaged in an animated conversation. There were few of the views that he had not seen in nature, and he pointed out the various beauties, and described those which the painter had failed to delineate, with so much taste and feeling that Mary listened with delight, and felt as though she had never known what was truly beautiful before.

It may well be imagined that with two beings so well calculated to enjoy each other's society, the time flew rapidly away. The noise and uproar of the adjoining room, which became more and more boisterous as the night advanced, was unheeded, and when the party began to break up Loraine expressed astonishment; and Mary, though she said nothing, felt it no less strongly. Eloise, who had already been introduced to Loraine, now joined them, accompanied by the other Englishman, who was immediately introduced to Mary. He was a tall, fine looking man, with handsome features, and an exceedingly amiable expression of countenance, but without any extraordinary marks of intellectuality. As it was moonlight, the two girls prepared for their walk home with great pleasure, positively refusing their host's offer to send them in his carriage. The two Englishmen, avowing their fondness for a moonlight ramble, declared their determination to accompany the girls a part of the way, for the purpose, as they said, of keeping off the rattlesnakes. By a little manœuvring Loraine contrived to secure Mary's arm; whilst Ellison took pos-

session of that of Eloise, and Theodore was sent on before as an advanced guard. Gay and happy they threaded the forest maze; and to hear their lively, but innocent mirth, and the light hilarous laugh that seemed every now and then to startle the echoes, one would have imagined that sorrow could never find its way into bosoms so full of the gladness of life.

CHAPTER IV.

"WELL, Eloise!" said Mr. Deland, as he came to the breakfast-table the next morning, and with that cheerfulness and good humor which accompanied his intercourse with all, both at home and abroad, "did you kill your thousands or your ten of thousands, last night, with that extraordinary frock?"

"Oh, pa! Do not, I beg of you, let me hear another word about the frock, for I am perfectly sick of the thought of it, and never intend to give myself any more concern about dress as long as live. I am not sure that I shall not make myself a linsey gown, as the people call them, and wear it forever more!"

"And what has made you so philosophic all at once, pray?"

"Why the success that I found attended Mary in her miserable old black frock. She was absolutely the belle of the party!"

"Oh, Eloise!" ejaculated Mary, in a tone that seemed to say, "how can you talk so!"

"Yes! It was certainly the case, Mary! Ask Theodore when he comes down, and if he has got his senses sufficiently awake to understand what you mean, he will tell you the same thing."

"I suspect it was owing to her wearing a dress that you have not yet learned how to put on, Eloise!" said her mother, with an arch smile.

"The dress of humility, or of simplicity, or modest dignity, or some of those vestal garments, I suppose you mean," returned Eloise, laughing; "for I believe she huddles all those on at once, and wears them morning, noon and night, lest she should forget to put them on some time when they are wanted, as poor unfortunate I so often do."

"You seem to be arrayed in a superabundance of them this morning," said Mary.

"No wonder! When I saw how much they were admired last night, even under the old rusty black frock."

"I wish I had been at home when Theodore came," said Adelaide, "and I would have taken good care that Mary had the frock she wanted; but Biddy says she understood she wanted a frock that was fit to walk through the woods with, so as to save her company frock."

"Well! I assure you, my sister, you need not give yourself the least concern about the mistake; for the gentlemen were perpetually running into the back parlor to look at either her or it; and as to Mr. Loraine——"

"Why you danced with him two or three times!" interrupted Theodore, who had entered the room as Eloise was speaking.

"That is very true, but it was before he had set his eyes upon Mary. After that, he simply danced one

set with Louisa, as he had engaged her before, and then no more dancing for him; even though he had expressed the hope, after we had finished the last dance, that he would be so fortunate as again to find me disengaged. But after he had seen Mary no more hopes or wishes were wasted upon me."

"You had a pretty good substitute in his friend," returned the brother.

"He might have done tolerably well if I had not happened to see the other first; and if I had not been obliged to hear the conversation of Lorraine and Louisa as they stood near me in the dance."

"What did they say?" asked Mr. Deland.

"My attention was first caught by hearing Louisa, who, I believe, is as anxious about Mary's looks as if they were her own, accounting for the singularity of her dress, which, she ended by saying, was of less consequence to her than it would have been to any one else; I then heard Lorraine, who stood next to me, murmur to himself, and quite unconscious, I believe, that he could be heard—

'When unadorn'd adorn'd the most.'"

"A very unhackneyed quotation," returned the father, with assumed gravity.

"Then Louisa asked him if he did not think her very handsome. 'Perfect! perfect!' he replied, with energy."

"I hope, Eloise, you have done detailing this detestable conversation!" said Mary, whose face and neck were both a deep crimson.

"No! indeed I have not! you must hear a good deal yet, for I am determined to punish you for taking my beau from me. Then pa!" she added, with a mischievous look, "on Louisa's making some remark about the shape of the nose or mouth, or some such feature, he said, 'it is not the particular form of the features that I care for. I could not pretend to say what are the features of the Madonna, but the sublime expression of the countenance is engraved on my heart, and that of your friend resembles it more closely than any human countenance I ever saw.'"

"You have certainly got your revenge," cried Mary, starting from the breakfast-table as she spoke, and quitting the room.

"Bravo! bravo! I have beaten you off the field!" Eloise laughingly exclaimed, as Mary closed the door after her.

From this time the two young Englishmen began to find Theodore's company exceedingly interesting, and became, through his means, almost constant visitors at "Forest Home." About this time, in consequence of having to make preparations for Adelaide's going to school, Eloise and Mary had, for a time, to suspend all visiting, so that the gentlemen, to their great satisfaction, generally found them in the evenings at home. Under such circumstances their acquaintance soon became intimacy; and they shortly felt themselves so familiarized in the family that they no longer required Theodore's patronage to procure them access to it. Ellison made no secret of his devotion to Eloise, and bore all her caprices with the patience of a martyr; while she, though constantly taking pains to convince him that he had no influence

over her heart, still received his attentions, and made herself merry at his cost. Her mother sometimes remonstrated with her about her behaviour, but she declared she had told him frankly what he had to expect, and after that, she said, he must just take his chance. Very different were things with Lorraine and Mary. An almost devotional admiration on his side; and though a less extravagant, a no less sincere one on her's, prepared the way for a warmer feeling, if in him at least it had not at once taken possession of the heart. But though months passed over in the continual enjoyment of each others society, and in the inward conviction on the part of each of being beloved, Lorraine had never ventured to speak explicitly of his passion. A feeling of deference in himself, which, when he considered Mary's extreme youth, he almost wondered at, still held him back, and he preferred luxuriating in the sweet hopes that filled his breast whenever her eye met his, to risking any abatement of his happiness by a too hasty avowal. Oh! sweet moments of virtuous and unmingled happiness when two pure and ingenuous hearts thus revel in the delight of mutual affection, and each find in the wish to become more worthy of the other only a stronger incitement to all that is valued by man and approved by God.

Lorraine had, one evening, contrived to draw Mary to a window where he could, apart from the rest, enjoy the sweets of an unrestrained conversation with her. They were suddenly, however, interrupted by Eloise calling to her cousin to ask if she did not think the 'high, stiff' collars seemed to be made for the express purpose of sawing off gentlemen's ears, the most disfiguring things in the world. Now it happened that the collars which Ellison wore were exactly of that description, and Eloise, as if solely for the purpose of tormenting him, went on expatiating on the Byron style of dress as being both becoming and classical, whilst Ellison seemed literally to writhe under her sarcasms.

"How could you torment poor Ellison so?" said Mary, after the two friends had taken their leave. "It is really absolute cruelty!"

"Oh! it is good for him!" replied the volatile girl. "It is exercising him in the art of pleasing. You will see that the next time he comes he will have his collar as much too low as it is now too high; for he has just about as much taste as a monkey that imitates without being able to judge of the right proportions."

"And you," said her mother, "have the monkey's disposition to torment, without much more power of judging when you go too far. You will try this young man's patience till he can bear no more, and then, as is no uncommon thing with you, will regret having given so much indulgence to your wayward humor."

"Whatever may happen, he will have no right to blame me," returned the daughter; "I told him the first time he spoke seriously to me that I neither did love him, nor ever could. And when he begged me to allow him to try to teach me, I told him I was sure it would be all lost labor, and that he must take the entire responsibility upon himself, and not blame me when he found he had failed. So I am sure he has nothing to complain of—I gave him fair warning."

"Perhaps he goes upon the principle that when a woman deliberates she is lost," replied the mother as she took up her bed candle and retired.

The next evening Loraine appeared alone and said Ellison was suffering from a severe headache. They all joked Eloise for having frightened away her lover; and when, on the following night, he was again absent, the family became more and more convinced that he was gone, and Theodore, whenever he came near his sister, repeated in a tone of affected tenderness—

"Till quite dejected with my scorn,
He left me to my pride."

But Eloise persevered in the belief that he was only waiting to make some great metamorphose, and that when he returned he would be found to be quite an altered man. At length, at the end of about a week, he appeared, and the moment he entered the room Eloise began to laugh.

"Why, Mr. Ellison!" she exclaimed, as soon as she could speak, "you surely expect to suffer martyrdom, and have prepared yourself for the block. And indeed you might do like—who was it?—ah! Anne Boleyn who clasped her neck and congratulated herself that it was so small it could easily be divided."

The young man stood completely at a loss how to look, or what to say. He had remained at home, and had employed the most accomplished tailor that the neighborhood afforded to make him a new suit, according to the best directions he was able to give them, but, as may easily be imagined, there was a something wanting; and the deficiency made his appearance grotesque and ludicrous to the last degree. It is a well known fact that we can better bear to be laughed at for those things we had no power to avoid, or which we have an inward conviction are right, than for those that have their origin in ourselves, and are the result of our own weakness or folly. Ellison was no deviator from the general rule. He was mortified beyond endurance at Eloise's ridicule. He had hitherto borne all her jokes and caprices with a degree of magnanimity that would have done honor to a better cause. But he now stood swelling with offended pride, and at length recovering his speech, turned to Mrs. Deland, and saying, "he should have the pleasure of paying his respects to her another time," quitted the room. In a few minutes they heard his horses' feet galloping off with the speed of one who was flying for his life.

Exceedingly mortified at the circumstance, both Mr. and Mrs. Deland gave their daughter a severe reprimand, and also charged Loraine with as handsome an apology as it was in their power to make. But though Ellison expressed his entire conviction that they were perfectly free from any intention of insulting him, it was not in his friend's power to induce him to visit the house again, and he very soon left the vicinity.

CHAPTER V.

LORAINÉ'S attentions to Mary continued unremitting. The pure and artless girl satisfied that the tie which was daily strengthening between her lover and

herself was approved by her kind guardians, sought not to repress the sweet emotions which had sprung up in her breast, and given to life a zest unknown before. Still Loraine spoke not absolutely of love, though his every look and action told the delightful tale.

Eloise had evidently labored for some time under a great depression of spirits. Mary had found that at night, when her cousin had imagined her to be asleep, she had often started out of bed and paced the room as if in a state of great agitation. This depression of spirits which became every day more and more evident, was the cause of much uneasiness to her affectionate and anxious mother, who could not but suspect it arose from regret at having driven Ellison away. By degrees both her appetite and that fine bloom on her cheeks, which had hitherto contrasted so beautifully with the matchless whiteness of her skin, began gradually to fail. She complained frequently of fatigue, and would spend hours on the bed in listlessness and languor. When questioned respecting her feelings, she would not admit that she was even indisposed. If anything was said about applying for medical advice, she would rouse herself for a time, and, laughing at the idea of a physician being called in, place the whole thing in so ludicrous a light, that for a time she calmed the fears of her anxious friends. Her family was at last willing to believe that the appearances they had observed had arisen from some accidental causes that youth and a good constitution would soon overcome. Winter too was coming on, and her mother hoped much from the gaiety which that season brings with it to the inhabitants of the country. Loraine still continued in the neighborhood, and was, at all times, ready to take Mary and her cousin in his sleigh, whithersoever they wished to go. But the fond mother's hopes were far from being realized. Her beloved child still continued to droop, and became subject to long and deep swoons. She also began to make great objections to all plans of pleasure, even though she knew they were got up purely on her account.

"If I were convinced that it is regret for the loss of Ellison that weighs on her spirits," said Mrs. Deland, one day, after she and Mary had been in conversation a long time about her; "I would really consult with Loraine about the probability of bringing him back. Could you not, Mary, manage to draw the truth from her?"

"I have done everything in my power to win her confidence," returned Mary, with an expression of deep concern; "but though I used to think we had but one mind between us, hers seems now to be entirely locked up from me." And here the big tears trembled in Mary's eyes as she spoke. "That her disease is mental I am convinced," the gentle girl continued, as soon as she could sufficiently repress her agitation to speak with composure; "for I have frequently been awakened at night by the sighs. But when I turned to her and tried in the tenderest manner to prevail upon her to tell me the cause, she always put me off by ascribing her agitation to some troubled dream, or something of a similar kind; and was often even angry if I appeared to doubt."

"What is your candid opinion? Do you think Ellison has anything to do with her sickness?" asked Mrs. Deland, anxiously. "I should really be thankful could I believe he had."

"Indeed, my dear aunt," replied Mary, earnestly, "I dare not flatter either you or myself with such a hope; I believed till very lately that she repented having offended him; but a few evenings ago, when Louisa Laybourne and Julia Winfield were here, I happened to be out of the room awhile, and I heard the girls screaming and laughing so loud that I was sure it must be Eloise that was amusing them; I hastened into the parlor and found her entertaining them with a ludicrous description of Ellison's looks when he came with his bare neck. I was convinced from that moment that whatever may be the cause of her unhappy state of spirits, he at least has nothing to do with it. She never could have held up to ridicule the man she loved!"

"No! certainly not! But this only makes the thing more distressing and perplexing. You must try, dearest Mary! as much as possible to win her confidence; and if it be possible for any one to do it, you surely can. The cause must be known before a remedy can be discovered; and unless that be speedily applied I see plainly that we shall have to make up our minds to behold her sink into her grave," and as she spoke, the anxious mother's tears flowed, whilst Mary's were mingled with them in the tenderest sympathy.

CHAPTER VI.

A FEW days after the conversation with which we concluded our last chapter, Mary happened to go unexpectedly, and at the same time so softly into their chamber, that Eloise, who at the time was indulging in a passionate flood of tears, was unconscious of her entrance. She was kneeling at the side of the bed, with her face hid in the bed clothes. Mary stood and viewed her with perfect astonishment, and as she did so Eloise raised her head in an attitude of devotion. "Oh! my God!" she exclaimed, "have mercy on thy weak and erring creature, and either remove me from this bitter trial, or give me strength to bear it. Oh! save me!—save me from what I am too weak, too selfish to bear!" And again her head rested on her couch, and her tears flowed in torrents. Mary, completely overcome by her agitation and evident misery, sunk down by her side and mingled her tears with those of the unhappy girl. Eloise at first started as she felt her cousin's arm passed gently over her neck, but soon giving way to the soft impulse by which Mary drew her toward her, she rested her head on the bosom of her sympathizing friend and sobbed aloud. Mary, as the violence of Eloise's grief began to subside, said in her soft, sweet voice, "dear Eloise! will you not tell me what is the cause of this distress?"

"Is it possible that you need to be told?" asked the weeping girl, raising her eyes as she spoke, and fixing them with an inquiring gaze on Mary's face.

"Indeed I am totally at a loss to form a conjecture," was Mary's reply, given in a tone that could not fail to carry conviction along with it.

"Then I have not exposed myself as much as I

imagined. Oh!" she added, raising her eyes to Heaven as she spoke, "that I might be removed before I become too weak, too enervated to keep my secret locked in my own bosom."

"Repose in mine, beloved Eloise. Are we not sisters? Have we not always been united by ties of affection, closer than the generality of sisters feel? And can you not trust me now? Have I ever deceived, ever forsaken you?"

"Oh! no, no!" cried Eloise, throwing her arms round the neck of her cousin. "You have ever been the kindest, the best of sisters, and the most perfect of human beings."

"Then will you not trust me? Will you not allow me the comfort of at least sympathizing in your sorrows, if I cannot have the happiness of relieving them."

"Is it possible that you need to be told?" again asked Eloise, with an expression of doubt.

"Indeed I am unable to imagine the cause of your distress, for you appear to me to be surrounded with everything that heart could desire. A home that is fitted to satisfy the wishes of any reasonable mind; excellent and devoted parents; affectionate friends and numberless admirers. What else can be required to constitute the happiness of any rational being?"

"Oh! Mary! Is it possible that you, who possess the heart of Charles Loraine, can ask what else is required?" A soft and beautiful blush overspread Mary's lovely and ingenuous countenance, and for an instant she was silent. She then said—

"I will not pretend to say that it is not sweet to love and be beloved, but can a girl like you, so young, so beautiful, so full of talent, be in any doubt of that happiness being in store for you? The only fear, dear Eloise! is, that though your heart is warm, your fancy is too fastidious. Even Charles Loraine himself, had he presumed to your affections, would have been received with the same scorn, and have been driven off with the same contempt that his poor friend met with."

"Oh! no! I would have knelt down in thankfulness to the Almighty for having awarded me such a treasure! I could have worshipped at his feet, or have laid down my life to show the fulness of my gratitude for the rich gift of his love! But such happiness was too great to be mine. I do not envy you, Mary!—oh! believe me, I do not envy you," and as she spoke she clasped her hands and raised her full blue eyes, as if calling upon Heaven to witness the truth of what she said, "but my constant prayer, night and day, is to be allowed to sink into the grave before you become his wife!"

Mary was thunderstruck! Sick and almost fainting, she laid her head upon the bed beside which she still knelt, and the big sighs swelled her breast almost to bursting. How long she remained in that state we will not pretend to say, but at length raising her fine eyes with a mingled expression of magnanimity, piety and sensibility, she breathed inwardly the words—"Heavenly Father! support me!" and then turning to her cousin, "be comforted, dearest Eloise," said she, "for you will never see me the wife of Charles Loraine."

Eloise fixed her eyes upon her face as if doubtful that she had heard her right, and at length said—

"Mary, even your tenderness for me will not sanction your breaking a solemn engagement."

"I am under no engagement as yet," replied Mary, "and believe me, Eloise, I should seek in vain for happiness if I sacrificed yours in the pursuit."

"Oh! Mary how little have I deserved this generosity. I who have pined over the thought of your happiness as if it were a corrosive poison gnawing at my very vitals. I hate myself when I think of my selfishness, and yet I have struggled against it; indeed, Mary, if you knew how I have struggled you would pity, even whilst you condemn me." And here Eloise's tears flowed in torrents as her head sunk upon the shoulder of her cousin.

"I know you have struggled hard, dear Eloise," said Mary, with as much tenderness in her tone and manner as if her cousin were aiding instead of interfering with her happiness. "I know you have, for I have seen daily the efforts you were making to overcome something, though I knew not what."

"I saw Charles Loraine," continued Eloise, "before you saw him; for he made his first entrance the night we met him at Mr. Laybourne's into the room where we were dancing, and was immediately introduced to me. I at once saw in his eye that expression of admiration that a young female so easily understands, and I flattered myself that I had touched his heart as powerfully as I at once felt he had impressed my own. He saw you, however, and my doom was fixed. I was conscious in myself of emotions that were not only new to me, and of a nature not to be overcome; but I saw that the same impression was made on your mind, for your eyes told a tale they had never before spoken. Oh! the philosopher may treat with contempt, and the matron with ridicule, the idea of first impressions ever being so powerful, but I know by fatal experience that they are capable of producing an effect which, with any mind less properly regulated than yours, Mary, might engender even madness itself! For some time I struggled with tolerable success against my disappointment, for, strange as it may sound, a disappointment it was. And here let me solemnly declare in justification of myself, that never either at that time, or at any future period, did

any feelings of envy or unkindness toward you as the cause of my sufferings, gain an entrance into my breast. As long as Ellison continued to come, I diverted my mind by playing with his feelings; but after he was gone, I was thrown entirely upon myself, and saw night after night Charles and you enjoying all the luxury of mutual love. Oh! Mary! think not too hardly of me when I say it—but it preyed upon my heart like a canker worm. It was a sight forever present before my eyes by day; and at night when we laid our heads on our pillows, and you were in a few minutes sunk in the sweet sleep, which virtue and purity such as yours can seldom fail to find, I was tossing about in feverish excitement, sometimes recalling the look of fond admiration with which I had seen Charles gazing upon you, and at others anticipating the time when he would bear you away to his native land as the wife of his bosom. It was at such moments as those, Mary! that I so frequently awoke you with my agitation. Oh! the frightful ideas that would sometimes come into my mind against myself—I hope my God, who knows that though I am weak, I am never deliberately wicked, will in His mercy pardon them."

After Eloise had ceased speaking, Mary sat for a considerable time, wrapt in deep and melancholy thought. At length she raised her eyes to her cousin's face, and said in a gentle, but solemn voice,

"Eloise, you shall no longer have to fear me as a rival. But still remember, that on yourself chiefly depends the restoration of your peace of mind. Without a humble and pious submission to the will of God all else will be unavailing."

Mary now rose, and was preparing to leave the room; but Eloise, who still remained in a kneeling position, clasped her arms around her knees, and exclaimed—"do not leave me, Mary! till you have said you forgive me for the misery I have inflicted upon you! Oh! say that you at least do not hate me!"

"Hate you, Eloise!" cried Mary, in a voice of the sweetest tenderness, and pressing her lips on the forehead of her cousin as she spoke. "Such a feeling never had entrance into my bosom. Oh! how could I dare to raise my eyes to Heaven and ask for mercy for myself if I refused it to you?"

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

A WASHING DAY EXPERIENCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SAVING AT THE SPIGGOT."

"My dear," said I, one Monday morning, as ominous washing day indications met my eyes, "why don't you put out the washing? I'm sure it would be a great deal better."

"Do you know what it would cost?" returned my wife, a little sharply, for, it being Monday, the influence of the day was already beginning to be felt.

"I don't know, exactly, how much it would cost," I replied; "but I do know, that it would be a great saving."

"A saving of what?"

"Of comfort, if of nothing else."

"Dear bought comfort you would soon find it."

"How much does the washing cost now?" I inquired.

"Sixty-two and a half cents," was answered.

"Is that all?"

"Yes. That is all I pay Hester for a day's work, and she does the whole of it in a day."

"But you forget that you have to board her," said I.

"And what is that?" returned my wife. "Her board costs nothing. One mouth more in the family is not felt."

"I am not altogether sure of that. Didn't you tell me, this morning, to get a pound or two more of meat for dinner, as the washerwoman was here?"

"You don't suppose she will eat two pounds of meat for dinner?" said my wife.

"I don't know anything about that. All I know is, that, for the reason you stated, I gave twenty cents more for meat than I would otherwise have paid. It's all the same whether she eats it or not. The extra expense is chargeable to her being in the house. A very reasonable addition for the cost of Hester's breakfast and supper, is twenty-five cents. These two items added, and you have, instead of sixty-two and a half cents as the cost of washing, the sum of a dollar and seven cents."

"And it would cost at least a dollar and seventy-five cents a week to put it out."

"Is that all?" I asked, rather surprised at the smallness of the sum. "Only a dollar and seventy-five cents."

"More likely it would cost two dollars."

"Which would not be much more than it costs us now," said I.

"Although, by your own showing, you made it about half that sum just now."

"Yes, but I am not done yet. There are a few more items to add. There is fire, which I will put down at a shilling, and soap, starch and indigo at as much more. Then comes the wear and tear of tubs, washing-boards, clothes-lines and pins, to say nothing of temper, all of which I will estimate at another

eight of a dollar. Breakage, consequent upon cook and chambermaids' ill-temper, the derangement of the household, and anarchical privileges of children, will not be covered, on an average, by a less sum than twenty-five cents. This swells the cost of washing per week to a dollar and seventy cents under the present system."

"Breakage! It's preposterous!" said my wife.

"Not at all. Don't you remember when Nancy slipped on the stairs where one of the children had lain a piece of the washerwoman's soap, and broke five dollars worth of things at one *smash*?"

"That's only a single case, and might have happened at any other time as well as on a washing day."

"And don't you remember the handsome wash pitcher Jane demolished in a washing-day fever, thus ruining a set that cost us ten dollars. As for tumblers, cups, saucers and plates, there is no end to their destruction on these occasions. And for a very plain reason. The breakfast-table stands in the floor until dinner time; and the dinner-table until supper time. Nobody has leisure to clear anything away; and there being nobody to attend to the children, they rummage about, with their hands into everything, and, as a natural consequence, there is no end to the destruction that accompanies their movements. Fifty cents a week, instead of twenty-five, would be a near approach to the loss we suffer from the cause."

"You might talk that at me until doomsday, and I wouldn't—"

A loud crash of broken dishes came up from the kitchen at this instant.

"Gracious!" exclaimed my wife. "What is that?" and she left my side in a twinkling, to investigate the cause and learn the extent of this new crockery disaster. I did not wait to ascertain the result; but decamped for my place of business, fondly hoping that what I had said, enforced so timely by a serious washing-day breakage, would have the desired effect.

At dinner time I went home in that delightful state of doubt as to the reception I should meet, which most men feel on like occasions. The first sound that saluted my ear as I entered, was the crying of one of the children; and instead of that savory odor of dinner, so grateful to a hungry man, I snuffed up a humid atmosphere, loaded almost to suffocation with the vapor of soap and ley. I passed the dining-room, but the table was not set. I went up into my wife's room; as I opened the door I was greeted with this exclamation—

"There! I knew it would be so! I don't believe Hannah has put a potatoe on to cook yet, although I sent her word an hour ago that it was time to see about dinner. But she has been as cross as she could be all the morning."

"She's been helping wash, I suppose," said I.

"Of course she has. She always does so. But, it's as easy to stop and get dinner at one time as another. I never saw such creatures. I wish you would ring that bell."

I did as desired. It was answered by the chambermaid.

"Go down and see what under the sun keeps Hannah back with her dinner."

The chambermaid retired, and, in a little while came back with word that the fire had all gone out, and that Hannah was just making it up again.

"Oh, dear!" said I, half involuntarily, drawing out my watch, and looking at the time. "It's nearly half past two, now, and I have an engagement at a quarter past three. I cannot possibly wait."

"It shall be ready in a little while," said my wife, looking distressed. "I'll go down and see to it. To think that girl would do so. But, it is always so on washing-days. Nothing goes right, and there is no comfort in the house."

To that sentiment I could have uttered an audible "amen." But, I deemed it prudent, just at that particular juncture, to observe a perfect silence.

Sooner than I expected, the bell rung, and I went down to the dining-room. I found my wife awaiting me at the table, with flushed and heated countenance, and many evidences of worry and excitement. She had cleared Hannah out of the kitchen, set the fire a going with her own hands, and cooked the dinner. But, she couldn't eat a mouthful, and my appetite was, by this time, among the things that were. I helped the children, and offered to help my wife, but she declined everything. After forcing a few mouthfuls down my throat, I left the table and my unhappy family, and retired to my place of business, feeling in no pleasant mood myself.

"And all this is to be borne and suffered once a week for the meagre saving of twenty or thirty cents—perhaps nothing! I must use my veto power; must bring into exercise my reserved rights, and I will do it. Suppose it cost a dollar a week more to put out the washing, what of that? Five dollars wouldn't pay for having the nuisance retained in the house."

Full of this resolution, I went home that evening. Things had resumed their old and more orderly appearance; for the spirit of discord—the washing-day fiend—had taken her departure. Still, my wife looked sober. The day had been one of great trial. I said nothing during the evening about an arrangement in the future such as I had proposed; but on the next night I alluded to the subject. Strange to say, my wife would not hear to it, and her objection was urged on the score of expense.

"It will not cost a cent less than two dollars a week to have them rough dried out of the house, and I cannot think of paying that."

"But, my dear, it costs nearly that to have the washing done at home."

"Oh, no. Not half of it."

"But I showed you, by a careful estimate of the true cost, that it did."

"That was a forced estimate. I know it doesn't cost over a dollar a week, every farthing counted. And to throw away fifty-two dollars a year is not to be thought of."

"Fifty-two dollars a year, laid out to secure the happiness and comfort of our whole family, for fifty-two days, is not a waste of money, by any means."

"But we can't afford it. Our income is not large."

"Suppose, then, we drop off two or three ice-creams, and a few other little nick-nackeries a week, that we can very easily do without, and get in exchange therefore a day of comfort."

But, it was useless for me to argue with my wife. She had a dozen reasons, all perfectly conclusive to her mind, why it wouldn't do to put the washing out. She understood the matter, and I knew nothing about it.

I had made up my mind, however, that the thing was to be done, for long suffering had worn out my patience.

"I'll stand the expense," said I to myself, "and not be much out of pocket either."

On the following morning I had occasion to go into the cellar to make up a fire in the furnace. A gentle tap loosened the hoops on a washing-tub, and I had a choice lot of "kindling." I was exceedingly liberal in its use, consuming every vestige! On the next morning, another tub performed the same important service, and on that which succeeded, I split up the washing-board, and gave six dozen clothes-pins, and a couple of clothes-lines, to the devouring flames.

On Saturday, I informed my wife of what I had done. You may suppose that she lifted her eyes, and grew pale with astonishment. But seeing me so earnest about the matter, she made but little opposition; and on Monday I had the supreme delight of seeing all things in order, and sitting down to a comfortable breakfast, dinner and supper with a smiling wife and happy children. The dollar and seventy-five cents which it costs, weekly, to have all our washing done out of the house, I pay with more cheerfulness, and with a more perfect consciousness of getting my money's worth, than I do any other bill that comes. And as to its costing any more to put out the washing than to have it done, in the house, I don't believe a word of it. Fire couldn't burn it into me. On this point, my wife and I are directly at issue. Strange to say, she has a kind of hankering after the old order of things, and if I were not so positive about the matter, I verily believe old Hester would be back again in less than a month. But I stand on my reserved rights here, firm and immovable; and there you will find me a dozen years hence, if I live. There are no more washing-days in my house. I have banished the spirit of disorder.

JESSICA;

OR, A STRAY LEAF FROM THE HEART.

BY JANE T. HARDIN.

It was a sheltered, little nook: a valley closed in by hills, until it was formed into a kind of emerald basin, with the waters of a small stream flashing and purling its way through its midst: this was the valley in summer; but now, alas! that it ever should be so, it was winter! And the very features that made this spot so beautiful amid sunshine and green foliage and bursting buds, but added to its desolateness at this season. The bare limbs of the trees creaked mournfully in the blast, as though bewailing their departed glory; the grass was all gone; the little stream had grown sullen, and wended its way moodily through the wet bottom. A small, white cottage was the only thing that gave relief to the scene; it was surrounded by a rail-fence—what is called a “worm fence” in the West: a garden spot was on one side, and on the other an orchard of some extent.

At the close of one of the dreariest days in the last of winter, a traveller was seen making his way as best he might toward this cottage; his horse plunged through the mud wearily, the fitful gusts of wind brought a chilling shower of rain into his face every few moments, and as the traveller stopped at the stile, and after fastening his horse to the fence approached the house, he seemed to move with difficulty, as though benumbed by cold, or suffering from some other cause.

His knock at the door was answered by a voice bidding him “come in,” and at the same time the latch was raised; and there was discovered sitting by a cheerful fire an old lady very plainly but neatly dressed; and, with one hand still resting upon the latch of the door, stood a young girl—you could scarcely say whether she were yet a child or a woman—for although her figure would indicate that she might, perhaps, be sixteen years of age—which in fact she was—yet the child-like expression of her wondering face as she raised it to that of the stranger, would induce the belief that she was not so old by several years. This is the impression that would have been made upon an indifferent spectator; to the applicant at the threshold nothing was distinctly seen but the warm fire, nothing asked but shelter for the night. The old lady arose, laid down her knitting, and welcomed him beneath her humble roof.

As he advanced into the room and laid aside his hat and riding-coat, it would have been difficult to recognize in the haggard features, half shrouded by the drenched hair, the elegant Lorenzo Carlyle, whose noble form had passed through the crowded rooms of fashion, “the observed of all observers” there: the glance of whose bright eye, or the bend of whose head had caused the heart of the young belle to flutter with joy. He was now just twenty-five, in the pride

of manhood, but as he took his seat, and the full light fell upon his face, he looked some years older. He had only been sitting by the fire a few moments, when his head rested heavily against the post of the bed near which he had been placed, and the old lady arising in some trepidation, discovered he had swooned; probably occasioned by the sudden transition from cold to heat. A servant woman was called from an outer room or kitchen, he was laid upon the bed, and the usual remedies resorted to for his recovery: at length he slowly awoke but only to find himself in a violent chill; he, however, arose and retired to the next room, a bed was prepared, he threw himself on it, but not to sleep; for, in spite of the old lady’s camomile tea, the chill continued a long time, and was succeeded by an alarming fever. In the morning his fever had increased, affecting his brain, until he was quite delirious, and he incessantly muttered to himself, “that dark, dark cloud!”

“Poor gentleman!” the old lady exclaimed, “he thinks he is still travelling through the rain.”

A physician was sent for, but for many days his skill seemed of little avail; the fever increased with frightful rapidity; he was insensible to all around him, and all this time the young girl Jessica sat by his bed, moistening his lips with water, changing his pillows, soothing him with her soft voice, that “most excellent thing in woman;” and though a servant man who completed this household, lifted him as he wished to be moved, the weary hours of watching were all kept by the maiden; and as she gazed upon him while he slept, no wonder that features which had been dangerous for an experienced woman of the world to look upon, were traced upon her heart; so very faint at the beginning, that they resembled the half defined shadows of a painter’s first imaginings, and gradually they grew more distinct, until at length they had all the perfectness of the finished picture thrown out upon the canvass.

And yet she knew it not; she did not pause to analyze her own feelings; she joined her innocent hands and prayed to God for his recovery, without thinking a moment beyond that happy period; for it is only by the bitter lessons of experience we learn, that whenever the heart begins to flutter with joy, the iron bars are just before it, against which it is destined to be bruised and broken.

One day, as Jessica sat by the bed-side of Carlyle, after a long and composed slumber he opened his eyes, and, for the first time, seemed rational. “My little lady,” he said, “I have been sick a long time, have I not?”

“Yes, sir, very long.”

"And have you been my nurse all this time?"

"Oh! sir," she replied, "it has given me great pleasure to nurse you; but you must not talk, you are too weak."

"Well!" he answered, "I will not; you are very good; but tell me what is your name, and where am I?"

"This place is called 'Green Vale,' and my name is Jessica, though they call me Jessie."

"Ah, yes," he replied, with a sigh, "I remember it all now: I was taken ill the night I arrived here: Jessica is a very pretty name; and the old lady who lives here is your grandmother?"

"No, sir, I have no relation, but when my father and mother died she took me, and has been very kind to me; so I always call her grandma." As she spoke her large, dark eyes filled with tears, and for the first time he noticed the exceeding loveliness of her face.

From this time he recovered, but slowly, for his constitution had undergone a terrible shock, and the bright sunny days of spring had come, and the pale blue flowers had begun to peep up, and the birds to trill forth their melody before he had gained strength enough to walk.

In this time he had learned from the old lady of the house the history of his young nurse. One day while he was alone with Mrs. Stephens, he said to her, "Jessie tells me she is not your grand-daughter. Is she a relation's child?"

"Ah, no, sir," replied the old woman, "though I love her as a daughter; but, poor child, it is hard to tell who she is. Her father and mother moved to this neighborhood when the child was young, and as pretty a couple they were, sir, as you would wish to look upon. But they were poor, weakly creatures, both of them, and though they scuffled mightily hard, they didn't seem to know how to get along. She was so fair and delicate—like it would have made you sorry to see her trying to work; and then she had a cough, poor thing! and got to be punier and punier every day; her husband tried all he could to save her from doing drudgery about the house, and I used to go over and milk the cow for her myself, and sent my servant woman over to wash for her, but it was all of no use. She wasn't made for earth, no how, to my way of thinking; at last she took to her bed, and her husband sent for the doctor, and I went over and tended her myself till she died. Ah, me, but that was a sad day, sir; her husband looked like somebody distracted, and poor little Jessie screamed and clung to her mother, and we couldn't get her away 'till she had cried herself to sleep. From that day the husband never looked up, but seemed to pine away like, and its my opinion if ever a mortal died of a broken-heart, it was him. When he was dying, he gave Jessie to me, and said, 'Mrs. Stephens, you were kind to my poor wife; will you not take my child and raise it, I have nothing to reward you for it, but Heaven will.' I could only cry, sir, like a baby, and press his hand to let him know I would; so, when he was dead and gone, I brought the child home with me, and I have tried to bring her up in the fear of the Lord. She is a mighty good girl, sir, and Heaven has, as he said, rewarded me, for I lost my husband when I was a young woman,

and my children have all been taken away before me; but the Lord has spared her to be a comfort to my old age. Her father called himself Loraine, and I've a notion they were great folks in Virginny, where they came from, for though they were not a bit proud, they had sort of a grand way about 'em that aint common, and then though they had precious little plunder, they had besides their Bible these here fine little books, which they would be reading in of a night. I have learned Jessie all the learning I know myself, which, to be sure, is not much, but she can read her Bible as pretty as any girl round about us, and she has read pretty nigh all that is in these books; she is powerful fond of reading, sir, and I wish I could have given her a better chance."

The books to which the old lady alluded were a few volumes of history, a copy of Shakspeare, several of Scott's novels, a volume of Dr. Chalmers' sermons, and the "Pilgrim's Progress." From this time Carlyle took an unwonted interest in the young Jessica: so helpless, so innocent and child-like was she, it was a sweet task to turn over the pages of her heart, to con the truths that had there been written by the finger of God: for although she had little of the world's wisdom, she had learned that wisdom from on high, which is "pure and peaceable." She had lived almost alone in the world, and had been saved from coarse associations by the care of the kind and good, if ignorant woman, who had brought her up.

Day after day she sat by Carlyle, reading to him the few books her father had left her, listening with eager wonder to his explanations of difficult passages, and sometimes when he would tell her what appeared to her untutored mind to be marvelous beyond credibility, her gay, ringing laugh would awaken the echoes of that happy valley: and as her teacher saw the brightening intelligence of her face; as he felt that he was opening to her a new world of beauty and enchantment; as he saw her gaze upon the starry Heavens of literature with the ecstasy that a Caspar Hauser looked, for the first time, upon the blue vault above him, he was filled with the purest joy in contemplating the ever increasing graces of his lovely pupil: yet he looked upon her calmly; he regarded her merely as a child; a child of great promise; a bud that might expand into a magnificent flower with proper culture; but he sighed to think this culture must be denied her: he sometimes almost felt as though he were doing wrong to awaken those aspirations in the mind which never after can be stilled; that thirst for knowledge which ever cries, "give! give!" Little did he dream that he was kindling a still more dangerous fire, that she was learning lessons more mysterious than those he taught, that as she read to him the glowing pages of *Ivanhoe*, and listened to his comments, "the book and teacher both were love's purveyors." Little did she know this herself: she only felt that she was happy, and this was enough to her young heart. She watched the changes of his face until she learned to read its emotions with a woman's accuracy, and she was troubled to see that often an expression of pain and melancholy overspread his countenance.

One bright evening, when the air was redolent with

spring's first flowers, and all things spoke of hope, they walked down to the rivulet, and as they looked into its clear, shining waters, Jessie felt it was an emblem of the current of her own life; so quiet—so full of low music: she was aroused from this reverie by the voice of her companion, who said, "Jessie, I have grown strong now, thanks to your care, and to-morrow I must leave you."

"Leave us! Why?" she exclaimed, and her face turned very pale; the thought of separation seemed never to have crossed her mind any more than if she had been in Heaven: poor thing! she had not lived long in the world.

"Oh!" he replied, "there are many reasons why I should leave: you know I could not remain here always; my business demands my presence, and—my wife perhaps expects me."

At the mention of "his wife," had a thunderbolt fallen at her feet she could not have been more astounded: yet she only turned a slight shade the paler, and betrayed by no word or sign her agony—like the Spartan boy she hugged to her heart the secret that was gnawing it out. After a few moments she observed in a tone of apparent indifference, "I am sorry you leave, but if your wife expects you, you ought to go; have you been long married?"

"Yes," he answered, while a low sigh escaped him, "several years; I was married young."

"And your wife—describe her to me!"

"She is very beautiful—but let me break you this cluster of plumb-blossoms," and returning to the house, they talked only of the blossoms.

That night Jessie retired to the little room or rather closet that was set aside for her use, and long and fervent was the prayer she put up, interrupted by bursting sobs and gushing tears, while she knelt by the side of her bed, and buried her face in its snowy covering: she arose serene, having, as had ever been her wont, committed herself and her fate to Him who can never err: and though she was sometimes tempted to say—"why have I been made so to suffer?" she hushed it by repeating, "His thoughts are not as my thoughts, nor His ways as my ways; but as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are His thoughts and His ways higher than mine."

The next morning their guest departed, and she said nothing to stay him, bidding him farewell calmly, and expressing such wishes for his happiness as she might have used for any other who had passed weeks under the same roof.

He knew, although they were poor and humble, they would disdain to receive a recompense for the trouble he had given them, but he presented the old lady a very handsome pocket Bible he had with him, and as he was leaving he placed upon Jessie's finger a ring containing a single diamond of the first water, and of whose value she was ignorant, saying, "Jessie, you will wear this, will you not, to remind you of the many pleasant days I have spent with you? Be a good girl, and may you be happy!" he added, as he kindly laid his hand upon her smooth brown hair.

And thus farewell was spoken, and as the young girl looked after him while he wended his way down through the valley and was lost in the distance, a

feeling of desolation fell upon her heart that she had never known before; that dream which had come over her as soft and beautiful as the light of a lunar rainbow faded away, and nothing was left but the dull grey of night: yet she was not one to yield to useless regrets; to indulge in feelings which would lead to unhappiness, if not to sin. Her's was the principle so happily expressed by our gifted poet, to

"Act, not in the living present,
Heart within and God o'erhead."

So with a half suppressed sigh she turned into the house, and after taking the ring off and laying it away in a little casket—for she felt it would be dangerous to wear it then—she went about her daily duties, and she was "resigned if not consoled;" for in the stern path of rectitude is gathered those flowers whose bloom is unfading, whose hues are immortal, which breathe to us the divine aroma of Heaven.

Three months from this time and that cottage was the scene of sadder suffering. Mrs. Stephens, who had enjoyed almost uninterrupted health during her whole life, had at length been stricken by disease: the time had come when she was to be "gathered to her fathers," and she was with Christian resignation yielding up her soul to the "Father of spirits." Her two old servants stood looking on the scene of death, while the tears rolled down their sable cheeks. Jessica knelt by the bed-side, her hand clasped within that of the dying woman, her whole frame quivering with emotion, and with each convulsive sob it seemed as though the heart of the maiden would break.

"My child!" the old lady articulated, "do not cry so sorely. God will take care of you. You have been a good child. Meet me up—up—up—I—come!" she murmured, and then more distinctly repeated, "I am the resurrection, and—and—the life," and then she breathed that long, deep sigh, the sound of which has fallen sadly upon many an ear; that sigh which extinguished the last faint spark in the anxious breast of the listener; that sigh which is the farewell of the wearied heart to the sorrows of earth.

Most happy is it that when the afflictions of life bear down too heavily upon us we find refuge in insensibility: as Jessie sank to the earth unconscious of her sad loss and most forlorn condition, a stranger who had entered the room unperceived, stepped forward and received her in his arms. He was a gentleman who had reached the meridian of life. In travelling through the country he was overtaken by night. Seeing a light he had stopped to inquire his way farther, when he was made a witness to this scene of woe. Taking her up in his arms, he laid her upon the bed in the adjoining room, and after chafing her hands for some moments he perceived the signs of returning sensibility, and left her in the care of some neighboring women who had just arrived. Unwilling to leave one apparently so helpless, he re-entered the room where the corpse lay, and taking a family Bible from a shelf, he passed into the little room usually occupied by Jessie, where a light had been left burning. He sat down, and reflecting upon the sad scene he had just witnessed, began to turn over the leaves of the Bible to find a portion suited

to the present solemn occasion; but as he turned he came to the family register, "Frederic and Mary Lorraine!" he repeated aloud, "that can be no other than my poor brother and his wife: but how came the Bible here, and who are these people?" He was too anxious to sleep, so going out in front of the cottage, he walked to and fro until day.

By the next evening the neighbors had gathered in, and all was disposed for the last solemn rites to be paid to the dead. The grave was dug in a quiet spot where the leaves rustled in the wind, and the sunbeams shone curiously through the overarching branches upon the green grass.

Still the stranger lingered; and after all was over and Jessica had seen the cold mould piled upon the only heart in the wide world that loved her, and had returned to her lone home feeling very miserable, he tapped at the door and was bid in a low voice, "come in."

When she saw him she started with surprise, for she had noticed no one since the death of her benefactress, and he was a stranger: advancing to her, he said, "I hope, young lady, you will pardon my intrusion at a time when you have so much cause for grief, but I too have my anxieties, and I am sure you will not hesitate to lesson them by informing me to whom that large family Bible belongs, and how it came here."

"That Bible," she replied, "was my father's, and when he and my poor mother died it became mine."

The old gentleman caught her in his arms, and as he kissed her again and again the warm tears fell upon her face, and she felt that she was not alone in the world. "God had tempered the wind to the shorn lamb."

"And you are the child of my poor brother, and he is, as I feared, dead? poor, poor fellow!" After weeping some time in silence, he said, "and were you his only child?"

"Yes, sir, he had no other."

"Poor fellow! how rash he was! I was his brother, some years older than myself: he was the joy and the pride of our family. I had married, and having lost my wife, took my little son and went to France. While I was absent your father married a lovely woman—I knew her well—but one who belonged to an humble family. My father, who was descended from a noble family in England, and had all the aristocracy of feeling so common to the old Virginians, could not brook this stroke to his pride. He refused to be reconciled to my brother, or give him any assistance. Your parents were poor, and after struggling in Virginia until after your birth, they determined to move to the West. Upon my return I made every inquiry for them, but was never able to trace them until Heaven directed me to you last night. Our parents relented before they died, and left him a large estate, which, my child, is all yours; and you shall never suffer, but shall be unto me a daughter if you will."

"Oh! most gladly, most gratefully," she replied. "Whither thou goest I will go," tears choked her utterance.

Her uncle tenderly embraced her. Preparations

were soon made for their journey. Mrs. Stephens having no relatives, the cottage with all the furniture was given to the two old faithful servants, and packing up her slight wardrobe, the books of her father, and the little box containing her ring, she was ready for departure. She took a long and tearful adieu of the grave of her more than mother, and then seated by the side of her uncle in his carriage, she was soon on her way to Virginia.

We have before mentioned that Mr. Lorraine had a son, a young man some four or five years older than Jessica, and we will pardon the old gentleman, if on his trip homeward he was so won by the gentleness and good sense of his niece, that he began to think it would be a very happy arrangement to make her his daughter; never supposing for an instant that any objection could be interposed by the parties principally concerned. When they arrived at the homestead in the "Old Dominion," George Lorraine was the first to welcome them. He had been riding over the plantation, and seeing the carriage he had galloped on to the house, and by the time the driver had stopped the horses he had dismounted, and was waiting for them cap in hand, his manly face glowing with exercise; his blue eye glowing with pleasure; his chestnut curls just so much disarranged as to heighten the effect of his remarkable personal beauty.

No wonder the heart of the father throbbed with pride as well as pleasure; no wonder there was a tone of gratification in the words, "bless thee, my boy!" as he pressed him to his bosom. When George was presented to his cousin, he met her timid glance with a look of admiring, though respectful wonder, and when his father added, "the daughter of your poor uncle Frederic," he kindly kissed her on the cheek.

Every day increased the affection of Mr. Lorraine for his niece; he employed the best masters that her want of early education might be remedied; and surely never did pupil more fully repay the kindness of her benefactor, or the care of her teachers: she had that burning desire for knowledge that has been attributed to the Lady Jane Grey, and however difficult or devious the path by which it was pursued, her eagerness never abated.

Thus passed away three years. She had persuaded herself that she had long since ceased to remember Lorenzo Carlyle with feelings at all dangerous to her peace, and thought she might venture now to wear the ring he gave her, regarding it only as the gift of one who had been kind to her in childhood. She accordingly wore it, thinking of him very calmly, or *as she thought* not at all. But in her mind there was an ideal formed composed of all perfections, that made her singularly indifferent to the young men around her, and gave to her manners a self-possession and dignity seldom seen in one so young; this ideal acted as a strange incentive in the acquisition of knowledge, and always arose before her when she had mastered a difficult piece of music, or had made a more than usually finished sketch.

But one thing troubled her, and that was her uncle's favorite scheme of uniting her to his son, which was made so visible in all his actions she was often pained

by it, until her cousin George, who was as careless and merry hearted as he was handsome, relieved her by saying:

"It seems, cousin Jessie, that my father is determined to make us happy in spite of ourselves by joining us 'in holy wedlock,' but do not look so persecuted about it, dear coz; I am not a knight errant nor hero of romance, to run off with you and marry you before you know it. You absolutely look sometimes as though you were apprehensive the ceremony had already commenced."

"No, cousin," she replied, laughing, "I really apprehend nothing of the sort, for though very kind you are not very lover-like, but my dear uncle's manner sometimes embarrasses me."

"Ah, well! never mind that, I shall manage it all very easily."

And from that time it was made a jest between her and her cousin, and all uneasiness was at an end. One day the young people were somewhat startled by the old gentleman announcing his determination to take them to Europe, but the proposal was too agreeable to be rejected, and forthwith every preparation was made, and soon they had bid "good night" to their "native land."

As we are not writing a description of "foreign countries," and care not to touch upon topics that have been lighted up by the electric genius of a Headly, or rendered attractive by the playful humor of a Stephens or the spiritual moralizing of a Cheever, we will make a jump of two whole years, and bring our travellers down in the middle of a muddy road with panting horses and a broken carriage, near a small village in the midst of the Alps: fortunately they were not far from the comfortable little inn the village boasted, and as none of them were seriously hurt, they were soon stationed in snug quarters, with the most obsequious of landlords, and most obliging of landladies. Unfortunately or fortunately, for things are just as we take them, their carriage had been very much damaged, and as they could not there procure another, it would be some days before they could proceed.

The evening that they arrived George knocked at his cousin's door, and when bid to enter walked in, saying—"well, coz, as you ladies cannot possibly exist without lovers and cologne, and as I know you have the last, for I supplied you myself, I went to our landlord to inquire what were your chances at this dismal little place for the first—so he told me he had a gentleman staying with him 'very grand and very magnificent,' and *everything* you could imagine, who had been here for some days searching among the mountains for flowers or rocks, or some other equally wise purpose, I do not remember precisely what. However, while we were talking in came this very grand and magnificent gentleman, and who should it prove to be but an old friend of mine, one with whom I went to college, though he was several years my senior. He left college and married the most beautiful termagant in the city of N——. He tells me she died some three years since, and really I felt like congratulating him, for it is no joke to live with such a woman seven years, as he did. And

now if you feel disposed to make him amends for his former wretched life, just put on your most becoming dress and most bewitching smile, and then bend on him those dark lustrous eyes that broke so many hearts in Naples, and the matter is concluded. By the way he sups with us to-night."

"You are exceedingly kind and thoughtful, my cousin, but in caring for me I fear you forget yourself. Have you not inquired of the landlord whether there is not some 'grand and magnificent' lady about the house to whom you could make your devoirs?"

"Ah, no! I am not so fastidious as you; I shall go back to Virginia and marry Clara Payton, who has more beauty than all the dark-eyed girls of Italy."

Jessica took up a book, commenced reading, and thought no more of the conversation until supper. When she entered the room a stranger arose, and was introduced to her as Mr. Carlyle; for an instant the blood rushed to her face and neck until it was all a glow of crimson, and then receded to her heart, leaving her like some pale and beautiful statue. Carlyle did not recognize in the graceful and elegant woman who stood before him—for she had more than fulfilled the promise of her childhood—the simple girl he had taught in the "Green Vale" of Kentucky.

But in a moment she recovered her self-possession, and advancing to him with calmness, remarked "that she had known Mr. Carlyle before," and then, for the first time, when that voice so "like a mournful lute" fell on his ear, he knew her; and as he pressed her hand, and expressed his joy at meeting her again, he noticed upon her finger the ring he had given her: but the next day it was gone.

Their detention was prolonged from time to time, yet none of the party found it wearisome. They wandered among the Alps; together they gazed upon this glorious scenery, and their evenings were spent in cheerful conversations and reading. And Carlyle's heart was bathed in the liquid light that beamed from the dark eyes of Jessica; his ear drank in the tones of her voice till its music filled his soul with streams of perpetual melody.

One morning they started to take a ramble among the mountains. Mr. Loraine refused to go on account of the fatigue: George started with them, but before they had gone far recollected that he had forgotten to give some orders about his gun, and turned back. Carlyle and Jessica were thus left to pursue their walk alone: for some distance they walked on in silence, when he remarked, "I little hoped when I first stopped at this obscure village, that here I was to pass the very happiest days I had ever known; but whatever may befall me in after life, the remembrance of this time will come up through all sorrow and darkness to cheer me. Would that I dared believe it had been as pleasant to you!"

"Oh, surely," she replied, in a light tone, "the time has passed very pleasantly, thanks to you and cousin George!"

"Nay, lady," he rejoined, "you mistake my meaning, or choose to do so," then stopping and looking steadily at her, he continued in an earnest tone, "Jessica, let me call you so, I love you! I love you more than I can tell you; more perhaps," he added, sadly.

"than your own heart answers to. But, lady, I must hear my destiny from your own lips; if you cannot return my affection I shall bear my fate as best I may. If you can—if you can love me, oh, Jessica! speak but one word. Give me but one look of assent!"

But Jessica spake no word; she lifted not her drooping lids, though her whole frame trembled with visible emotion. All the light of hope faded from the face of Carlyle, and they walked on in silence; she feeling that she had wounded the heart that loved her, and yet too timid even to make the attempt to soften the pain. At length they came to one of those immense fields of ice that are found among the Alps: bordering this glacier across from where they stood, some delicate flowers had sprung up through ice and snow to meet the glad sunshine. Jessica, to relieve the awkward embarrassment of their silence, remarked how beautiful they were. He replied,

"If you wish them, Miss Loraine, I will get them for you," and immediately stepped on the ice.

"Oh, no, no!" she answered, "do not risk yourself," and in her eagerness sprang after him to hold him back: the ice gave way beneath them, they were precipitated down—down into the dark chasm below, and when they touched the bottom it was to find themselves in one of those immense caverns that add terror to those wild mountains. Jessica had been shielded by the arm that Carlyle threw around her in falling; but he was bruised and hurt. Death stared them in the face, for what hope could there be of escape from that living tomb?

"This is dreadful! horrible!" he exclaimed, as they reached the bottom.

"Miss Loraine, are you hurt?"

"No," she replied; "but you?"

"Oh, I care not for myself, but I must make some effort to extricate you from this awful place: this place of death."

"Lorenzo!" she answered, in a low, timid voice, "it will not be terrible to die with you. Oh, it would be much more dreadful to live in the bright world above without you, than to be buried with you here in darkness and in death." And the maiden's head sank upon his bosom, while tears of tenderness gushed forth.

His arm encircled her waist; he pressed her to his heart, and here in the sight of eternity their love was plighted: here, in the midst of terror and darkness, light was in their dwelling. For hours they groped their way, hopeless almost of ever again seeing the light of day; but their dreary path was cheered by the words of affection. When "hope had almost folded her wings and saddened to despair," they heard the sound of gurling waters: it was a small stream, they followed its course; where it ran from under the glacier into the open air, stray beams of light were struggling through; the ice was thin and partially melted, so that a place of egress was effected, and by the side of this stream, as it murmured through the vale, the lovers knelt and returned thanks for their deliverance.

A few months brought our whole party back to their homes, and as Jessica stood at the altar by the side of him whom alone she had ever loved, she did not regret the vows given in the cavern of the Alps.

THE MOTHER AND BOY.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"Tom, let that alone!" exclaimed a mother, petulently, to a boy of seven years old, who was playing with a tassel that hung from one of the window blinds, to the imminent danger of its destruction.

The boy did not seem to hear, but kept on fingering the tassel.

"Let that be, I tell you! Must I speak a hundred times? Why don't you mind at once?"

The child slowly relinquished his hold of the tassel, and commenced running his hand up and down the venetian blind.

"There! There! Do, for gracious sake, let them blinds alone. Go 'way from the window this moment, and try and keep your hands off of things. I declare! You are the most trying child I ever saw."

Tom left the window, and threw himself at full length into the cradle, where he commenced rocking himself with a force and rapidity that made every thing crack again.

"Get out of that cradle! What do you mean? The child really seems possessed!"

And the mother caught him by the arm and jerked him from the cradle.

Tom said nothing, but, with the most imperturbable air in the world, walked twice around the room, and then, pushing a chair up before the dressing-bureau, took therefrom a bottle of hair lustral, and pouring the palm of his little hand full of the liquid, commenced rubbing it upon his head. Twice had this operation been performed, and Tom was pulling open a drawer to get the hair brush, when the odor of the oily compound reached the nostrils of the lad's mother, who was sitting with her back toward him. Turning quickly, she saw what was going on.

"You!" fell angrily from her lips, as she dropped the baby in its cradle. "Isn't it too much!" she continued, as she swept across the room to where Tom was standing before the bureau-dressing-glass.

"There, sir," and the child's ears rang with the box he received. "There, sir!" and the box was repeated. "Hav'n't I told you a hundred times not to touch that hair oil? Just see what a spot of grease you've made on the carpet. Look at your hands!"

Tom looked at his hands, and, seeing them full of oil, clapped them quickly down upon his jacket and tried to rub them clean.

"There! Stop! Mercy! Now see your new jacket that you put on this morning. Grease from top to bottom! Isn't it too much! I am in despair!"

And the mother let her hands fall by her side, and her body drop into a chair.

"It's no use to try," she continued. "I'll give up. Just see that jacket! It's totally ruined. And that carpet too. Was there ever such a trying boy. Go

down stairs this instant, and tell Jane to come up here."

Tom had reason to know that his mother was not in a mood to be trifled with, so he went off briskly and called Jane, who was directed to get some fuller's earth and put upon the carpet where oil had been spilled.

Not at all liking the atmosphere of his mother's room, Tom, being once down in the kitchen, felt no inclination to return. His first work there, after delivering his message to Jane, was to commence turning the coffee-mill.

"Tommy," said the cook, mildly, yet firmly, "you know I've told you that it was wrong to touch the coffee-mill. See here, on the floor, where you have scattered the coffee about, and now I must get a broom and sweep it up. If you do so, I can't let you come down here."

The boy stood and looked at the cook, seriously, while she got the broom and swept up the dirt he had made.

"It's all clean again, now," said the cook, pleasantly. "And you won't do so anymore, will you?"

"No, I won't touch the coffee-mill." And, as Tom said this, he sidled up to the knife-box that stood upon the dresser, and made a dive into it with his hand.

"Oh, no, no, no, Tommy! That won't do either," said the cook. "The knives have all been cleaned, and they are to go on the table to eat with."

"Then what can I play with, Margaret?" asked the child, as he left the dresser. "I wan't something to play with."

The cook thought a moment, and then went to a closet and brought out a little basket filled with clothes-pins. As she held them in her hand, she said—

"Tommy, if you will be careful not to break any of these, nor scatter them about, you may have them to play with. But, remember, now, that as soon as you begin to throw them around the room, I will have to put them up."

"Oh, no, I won't throw them about," said the little fellow, with brightening eyes, as he reached out for the basket of pins.

In a little while he had a circle formed on the table, which he called his fort; and inside of this he had men, cannon, sentry-boxes, and other objects that were suggested to his fancy.

"Where's Thomas?" asked his mother, about the time the lad had become fairly interested in his fort.

"I left him down in the kitchen," replied Jane.

"Go down and tell him to come up here instantly."

Down went Jane.

"Come along up stairs to your mother," said she.

"No. I won't," replied the boy.

"Very well, Mister! You can do as you like; but your mother sent for you."

"Tell mother I am playing here so good. I'm not in any mischief, am I Margaret?"

"No, Tommy. But your mother has sent for you, and you had better go."

"I don't wan't to."

"Just as you like," said Jane, indifferently, and she left the kitchen and went up stairs.

"Where's Thomas?" was the question with which she was met on returning to the chamber.

"He won't come, ma'am."

"Go and tell him, that if he doesn't come up to me, instantly, I will put on his night-clothes, and shut him up in the closet."

The threat of the closet was generally uttered ten times where it was executed once. It made but little impression upon the child, who was all absorbed in his fort.

Jane returned. In a few moments afterward, the quick, angry voice of the mother was heard ringing down the stairway.

"You Tom! Come up here this instant."

"I'm not troubling anything, mother."

"Come up, I say."

"Margaret says I may play with the clothes-pins. I'm only building a fort with them."

"Do you hear me?"

"Mother!"

"Tom! If you don't come to me this instant I'll almost skin you. Margaret! Take them clothes-pins away. Pretty play things, indeed, for you to give a boy like him! No wonder I have to get a dozen new ones every two or three months."

Margaret now spoke,

"Tommy, you must go up to your mother."

She took the clothes-pins and commenced putting them into the basket where they belonged. Her words and action had a more instant effect than all the mother's storm of passion. The boy left the kitchen in tears, and went slowly up stairs.

"Why didn't you come when I called you? Say!"

The mother seized her little boy by the arm, the moment he came in reach of her, and dragged, rather than led him up stairs, uttering such exclamations as these by the way.

"I never saw such a child! You might as well talk to the wind! I'm in despair! I'll give up! Humph! Clothes-pins, indeed! Pretty play things to give a child! Everything goes to rack and ruin! There!"

And as the last word was uttered, Tommy was thrust into his mother's room with a force that nearly threw him prostrate.

"Now take off them clothes, sir."

"What for, mother? I haven't done anything. I didn't hurt the clothes-pins. Margaret said I might play with them."

"D'ye hear? Take off them clothes, I say."

"I didn't do anything, mother."

"A word more, and I'll box your ears until they ring for a month. Take off them clothes, I say! I'll teach you to come when I send for you. I'll let you see whether I am to be minded or not."

Tommy slowly disrobed himself, while his mother, fretted to the point of resolution, eyed him with an unrelenting aspect. The jacket and trousers were removed, and the night drawers ordered to be put on, in their stead, Tommy all the while protesting, tearfully, that he had done nothing.

"Will you hush!" was all the satisfaction he received for his protestations.

"Now, Jane, take him up stairs to bed. He's got to lie there all the afternoon."

It was then four, and the sun did not set until near eight o'clock. Up stairs the poor child had to go, and then his mother had some quiet. Her babe slept soundly in its cradle, undisturbed by Tommy's racket, and she enjoyed a new novel to the extent of almost entirely forgetting her lonely boy shut up in the chamber above.

"Where's Tommy?" asked a friend, who dropped in about six o'clock.

"In bed," said the mother, with a sigh.

"What's the matter? Is he sick?"

"Oh, no. I almost wish he were."

"What a strange wish! Why do you say so?"

"Oh, because he is like a little angel when he is sick—as good as he can be. No, I had to send him to bed as a punishment for his disobedience. He is a hard child to manage. I think I never saw one just like him. But, you know, obedience is everything. It is our duty to require a strict regard to this in our children."

"Certainly. If they do not obey their parents, as children, they will not obey the laws as men."

"That is precisely the view I take. And I make it a point to require implicit obedience in my boy. This is my duty as a parent. But it is hard work."

"It is, doubtless. Still, we must persevere, and, in patience possessing our souls"

"To be patient with a boy like mine, is a hard task. Sometimes I feel as if I would go wild," said the mother.

"But, under the influence of such a feeling," remarked the friend, "what we say makes little or no impression. A calmly uttered word, in which there is an expression of interest in and sympathy for the child, does more than the sternest commands. This I have long since discovered. I never scold my children. Scolding does no good, but harm. My oldest boy is restless, excitable and impulsive. He is ever seeking for something to do. If I were not to provide him with the means of employing himself, or in other ways interest him, his hands would be on everything in the house, and both he and I be made unhappy."

"But how can you interest him?"

"In various ways. Sometimes I read to him; sometimes I tell him stories; sometimes I set him to doing things by way of assisting me. I take him out when I can; and let him go with the girls when I send them on errands. I provide him with play-things that are suited to his age. In a word, I try to keep him ever in my mind; and, therefore, find it not very difficult to meet his varying states. I never thrust him aside, and say that I am too busy to attend to him when he comes with a request. If I cannot

grant it, I try and not say 'no,' for that word comes too coldly upon the eager desire of an ardent-minded boy."

"But, how can you help saying 'no,' if the request is one you cannot grant."

"Sometimes I ask if something else will not do as well; and sometimes I endeavor to create a new interest in his mind. There are various ways in which it may be done, that readily suggest themselves to those desirous for the good of their children. It is affection that inspires thought. True love of children always brings a quick intelligence touching their good."

Much more was said, not needful here to repeat. When the friend went away, Tommy's mother, whose heart convicted her of wrong to her little boy, went up into the room where she had sent him to spend four or five lonely hours as a punishment for what was, in reality, her own fault and not his. Three hours of the weary time had already passed. She did not remember to have heard a sound from him, since she drove him away with angry words. In fact, she had been too deeply interested in the new book she was reading, to have heard any noise that was not of an extraordinary character.

At the door of the chamber she stood and listened for a moment. All was silent within. The mother's heart beat with a heavy motion. On entering, she found the order of the room undisturbed. Not even a chair was out of place. Tommy was asleep on the bed. As his mother bent over him, she saw that tears were upon his cheeks and eyelids, and that the

pillow was wet. A choking sigh struggled up from her bosom. She felt a rebuking consciousness of having wronged the child. She laid her hand upon his red cheek, but drew it back instantly. It was hot with fever. She caught up his hand; it was also in a burning glow. Alarm took the place of grief for having wronged her boy. She tried to awaken him, but he only moaned and muttered. The excitement had brought on a fever.

When the father came home and laid his hand upon the hot cheek of his sleeping boy, he uttered an exclamation of alarm, and started off instantly for a physician. All night the wretched mother watched by her sick child, unable from fear and self-reproaches to sleep. When the morning broke, and Thomas looked up into her face with a glance of trusting affection, his fever gone, and his pulse calm, the mother laid her cheek, thankfully against that of her boy, and prayed to Heaven for strength to bear with him, and wisdom to guide his feet aright; and as she did so, in the silence of her overflowing heart, the lad drew his arm around her neck, and kissing her, said—

"Mother, I do love you!"

That tears came gushing over the mother's face, is no cause of wonder, nor that she returned, half wildly, the embrace and kiss of her child.

Let us hope that, in her future conduct toward her ardent, restless boy, she may be able to control herself; for then, she will not find it hard to bring him under subjection to what is right.

MY COUSIN GRACE.

BY MARY DAVENANT.

My cousin Grace was an old maid! She was just turning the unhappy corner that leads a woman into her thirty-fifth year, and settles her undeniably, and indisputably amongst that much abused class who have no right to expect either attention, admiration, or anything beyond bare civility from the other sex, however much they may be loved and valued by their own.

"A single woman of thirty-four!" exclaims some laughing beauty of sixteen—"why she is old enough to be my mother—what in the world can you find to interest one about her?"

Something, my fair lady, as you shall hear if you have patience with me and listen while I tell you. Beautiful and attractive as you may be with your sixteen summers, I doubt whether you are a particle more so in the eyes of any—except your lover, if you have one—than was my cousin Grace, who had seen her thirty-four.

And yet she had scores of lovers, for she was beautiful, high-born, and wealthy. She lived with her parents at their country seat. Althorpe is but little more than three miles from town, and from her early girlhood until now Grace had mixed largely in its most fashionable and aristocratic circle, which is in fact nearly half made up of her extended family connexions; among whom, gay, intelligent, cultivated, high-bred and beautiful as she was, she had always been a perfect idol—not the less so, perhaps, for the kind of interest and curiosity that was constantly kept up as to the chances of success shared by the various aspirants for her favor.

For the truth must out—my cousin Grace still liked admiration, yes, indiscriminate admiration both from young and old. She was a sad flirt—she laid herself out to please and to fascinate everybody, and she always succeeded. Even rival belles who envied her with all their hearts, admired her too—they could not help it. There was a charm in her voice, her glance, her smile, that was irresistible. Whenever she talked to you, you felt that you were the person whose society she preferred to that of anybody else—and so she did for the moment—and though you knew the next moment she might prefer another, the frank yet flattering look and tone told in the warmth you felt round your heart while under their influence, and you silently acknowledged she was a most bewitching creature.

Still the world in general, and especially her discarded lovers, would constantly add another expletive, an unfortunate, *but* that nullified all previous praise—"but thoroughly heartless." Heartless!—we who knew and loved her well knew that she was all heart, except to those who asked for it all, and her hand beside. Hers was a heart warm with every

noble impulse, grateful, generous, affectionate, charitable even to profusion. Heartless! No, as I have said a hundred times, she has no heart to give, when none worthy of her is offered in return. No heart for the selfish, the vapid, the frivolous, the soulless who throng around her, and have the vanity to think they gain her love.

So I thought in the first years of my young experience of the world and its ways, but as time went on, and I saw more than one aspiring to her hand, whom, even I, loving and reverencing her as I did, thought worthy to gain it, I began to wonder too, and silently observed and stealthily inquired whether some early blight or secretly cherished preference, had not deadened its susceptibility in that part alone where the female heart is most open to impression?

I was staying at Althorpe, and Grace and I were to go into town to a party given by one of our friends. We were in the habit of driving in and out again late at night, sufficiently protected by two faithful servants who had been many years in the family. This was to be quite a *recherche* party; the garden, which was a large one, was to be illuminated, and though Grace had complained of a headache through the day, neither she nor I had a thought of giving up going on that account.

Our toilettes were successful. Both my cousin and my glass told me I had never looked better in my life, and as she stood on the portico in the summer twilight in her exquisitely tasteful evening costume, a few cape jessamines amid her glossy curls, with jewels sparkling on her snowy neck and arms, while her India scarf was wrapped by her careful mother to screen her from the fresh night breeze that had just arisen, I thought I had never seen her look so beautiful.

There was a languid expression in her brow and eye, caused by the slight headache that affected her, which gave an indescribable softness to her expression, and after we were seated in the carriage, and were driving through the wooded entrance to Althorpe, I could not refrain from putting my arms around her and kissing her fondly. She placed her hand in mine and looked at me with deep affection, as she replied—

"I know you love me, Mary—and the most precious thing on this wide earth is love—love."

I felt her hand tremble in mine, and saw a tear glistening in her eye—but she laughed as she brushed it away, and began to talk gaily of our approaching pleasure.

On our entrance Grace was as usual surrounded by friends and admirers. Never had I seen her more brilliant or more gay. She danced frequently, and when she was not dancing flirted desperately. The

and the sadness were evidently gone, and her animated face seemed radiant with happiness.

I too enjoyed the party more than usual, for in the very beginning of the evening I made a new acquaintance who interested me extremely. He was presented by the lady of the house as Mr. Walsingham, and this was all I knew of him, except that he was tall, dignified, handsome, unusually intelligent, and seemed to have travelled all over the world. Indeed so absorbed did I soon become in the interesting conversation with which he entertained me, that I entirely forgot it was a dancing party, and that the earnestness with which Mr. Walsingham spoke and I listened, was effectually preventing any of my usual partners from asking me to dance—a matter that on common occasions would have annoyed me considerably. Still I was pleased when at last he observed that all the world seemed dancing, and asked my hand for the next cotillion.

My partner was evidently not a dancing man; it was plain he took no interest in the amusement, and went through the figures only for the sake of enjoying my society. My vanity was gratified, and I recollected with pleasure that I was very becomingly dressed, and looked uncommonly well.

It so chanced that my cousin Grace was our vis-à-vis in the dance, and on his making some observation on her appearance, I told him who she was and offered to introduce him. He answered slightly that she appeared so much engrossed with her partner, that it would perhaps be considered an interruption—"I am a very modest man," he added, smiling, "and will beg the favor at another opportunity."

I was surprised at this, for it was a rare thing if any stranger of note failed of an introduction to Grace. I looked at her partner with whom she did appear entirely engrossed, and my wonder increased, for he was a very common place person, for whom I knew she had not the slightest regard; while Mr. Walsingham drew me on to talk of her, and listened with an interest that seemed quite at variance with the indifference he professed to making her acquaintance. When our dance terminated, my hand was asked by another gentleman, and Mr. Walsingham disappeared among the crowd.

It might have been an hour afterward, when heated with dancing, I was just stepping through a large window which opened from the floor of the ball-room into the illuminated garden, when in one of the walks I observed a slight commotion, and as I hastened onward with my partner to discover the cause, I was terrified to see Mr. Walsingham striding toward the house, bearing in his arms the lifeless form of my cousin Grace.

The cry of surprise and distress brought a crowd round us, and among them the lady of the house, who begged Mr. Walsingham would allow some one to assist him in conveying his helpless burden up stairs to her chamber. It was almost with fierceness that he refused all aid. My cousin's head was on his shoulder, and her beautiful arms were lifelessly hanging round his neck. He gave not a word of explanation, but bore her amid the surrounding crowd up to Mrs. R——'s apartment, where having placed her on

a couch, he bent over her, applying most skillfully the restoratives that were offered, and quietly but decidedly allowing no one to interfere with him.

After a short time Grace opened her eyes, and heaving a sigh looked around: her eye rested a moment on his face, and then closed again. "Thank God," he muttered, fervently, and without another word left the room. I was almost speechless with astonishment, while my cousin rapidly revived, and in reply to the numerous questions that assailed her—for no one had seen her faint or known the cause—she told us that feeling tired with the excitement of the crowd, she had retreated into the garden, and there she supposed had fainted, for that she knew nothing more until she found herself in Mrs. R——'s chamber—that she had had a headache, which I knew was true—that her fainting was nothing uncommon, which I knew was a fib—and finally that she then felt as well as she ever did in her life, and was determined to ride all the way home that night instead of staying where she was, or going to either of her sisters or to our house, which we all thought she had better do.

A wilful woman will have her way, and Grace had hers. She refused to allow any one but myself to accompany her home, and reiterating gay adieus and assurances that she was perfectly well, we both stepped into the carriage. What was my surprise to see Mr. Walsingham step in after us, and without a word of opposition from Grace, seat himself opposite to her, while the door closed upon us, and the carriage drove off. I heard a few murmured questions and answers beside me, while I drew myself as closely as possible into the corner of the carriage, endeavoring to solve as best I could the enigma of my cousin's conduct. It was plain to me that what I had for years suspected was the truth. There had been a disappointment and a secret preference, and while I was trying to hitch together my romance, the murmured conversation, with a few intervals of more expressive silence, went on between my companions until we reached home.

Then there was a tender farewell, a "God bless you, Grace," and Mr. Walsingham darted from the carriage, and I presume walked back to town in the bright moonlight. As soon as we entered the house, I gave my cousin a searching glance.

"Not to-night, Mary—not to-night—I have gone through too much," she said, in reply to my look of eager curiosity.

"But you are happy, cousin?"

"Only too happy," she said, embracing me affectionately—"far happier than I desire—so good night, love—to-morrow you shall know all."

And on the morrow I did know all, at least all that Grace could tell me, and Mr. Walsingham (who came even earlier than he was expected) not many days after told me the rest. Between them both I discovered it was Grace's passion for indiscriminate admiration that had interrupted the course of as true a love as ever was sung by bard or felt by swain.

There had, it seems, been a private engagement, which being suspected by some, was denied by Grace so earnestly, and disproved so plausibly by her pleased acceptance of the attentions of others, that her lover

had become jealous and remonstrated seriously with her, urging her to permit him at once to apply to her parents, of whose assent they were assured, and to announce their engagement. To this Grace would not consent, as she asserted women who were engaged were always neglected by other men, and she wished to enjoy her triumphs as long as possible. A misunderstanding was the result. Mr. Walsingham, proud, passionate, but still madly in love, had left the country convinced of Grace's heartlessness.

Still he could not tear her image from his heart. Restless, dissatisfied, he had wandered from country to country, "dragging at each remove a lengthening chain," until after twelve years wandering he had returned more devotedly attached than ever to the fair cause of his voluntary exile. Grace had heard of his return a few days before Mrs. R——'s party. They met as strangers. He watched her closely without appearing to do so, and detected a nervous excitement amid her gaiety, which led him to suspect it was assumed, and gave him a faint hope that he was not quite forgotten.

My answers to the few questions he had adroitly put concerning her had increased this hope, and he never lost sight of her from that moment. He witnessed her increasing weariness of the part he was now sure she was enacting, and at last saw her slip from her companions into the then quiet and deserted garden. She sought a secluded arbor, and he lost not a moment in following to know his fate. Her head was resting on her hands when he approached before her, and she was sobbing as if her heart would break. He took her hands in his, exclaiming—

"Grace! my own beloved Grace!—more beloved now than in the hour you promised to be mine—can you forgive me? God only knows what I have suffered, but a word from you will repay it all!"

Grace gave a slight cry—extended her arms toward him and fainted on his bosom. He made every effort to restore her, but finding all in vain, was obliged as we have seen to convey her where she could receive more effectual assistance.

The next day I was amused by listening to my grand aunt's reminiscences, and endeavorings to put things together, that she might satisfactorily convince herself that Grace had really loved Mr. Walsingham for so long a time.

"I am perfectly certain, my dear," she said, "that she behaved to him exactly as she did to her other admirers—at least I can recollect no difference. To be sure, after he went away, she had a nervous fever, but as it was full six weeks afterward I never thought of putting the things together—who would? And when she got well, which was not for a long time, however, she was just as happy and merry as before. I am sure I saw nothing strange in her refusing to marry. I was always very glad of it, and what I am to do now is more than I can tell."

A few weeks afterward I stood beside my cousin on her wedding day, and surrounded as she was by the young and beautiful, it needed not her rich bridal dress and flowing Brussels veil to render her the cynosure of every eye. She certainly did not look more than four-and-twenty, and the expression of heartfelt happiness, of deep tenderness, combined with the solemn, religious awe that rested on her face as she uttered the vows required of her, gave an almost seraphic expression to her always brilliant beauty. I cannot say more of Mr. Walsingham than that he was worthy of the treasure she then bestowed upon him, and that though she has now been three years a wife, Grace still thinks him so. The only shadow that rests upon her happiness arises from her regret that her silly love of admiration caused so many years of sorrow to the husband she loves with daily increasing affection.

Truth, however, compels me to confess that this repentance has not altogether produced amendment, for Mrs. Walsingham still continues to be as much admired as ever, aye, and to enjoy it too. It is not more than a fortnight since we were at a party together, when it was decided by a competent tribunal of connoisseurs in female beauty, that the handsomest woman present was my cousin Grace.

THE FOREST HOME.

BY MRS. HUGHES, AUTHOR OF "ORNAMENTS DISCOVERED," "AUNT MARY'S TALES," &c. &c.

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 137.

CHAPTER VII.

MARY, after leaving her sister, hurried to her chamber, where she cast herself prostrate in an agony of mental torture. Long she lay before she attained any thing like composure in her feelings, or coherency in her thought. The idea that she had voluntarily, and without any fault of his, abandoned Loraine, sometimes drove her almost to delirium. Frequently she was on the point of returning to Eloise, telling her she found it impossible to comply with the promise she had given, and urging her with all the persuasiveness of which she was mistress, to exert the energy so natural to her character, to overcome her unfortunate prepossession, and not doom two beings whom she loved to such unspeakable misery. But then, again, the conviction that Eloise's life was in actual danger, and the idea of allowing the friend and companion whom she had loved from her earliest infancy, to sink into the grave from which she might rescue her, repressed the selfish yearnings of her heart, and again she determined to persevere in her first resolution. Besides, though she had the utmost confidence in Loraine's affection, and had never entertained a doubt, should she become his, of that affection remaining firm and unwavering, yet when convinced that all hope was vain, and that she could never bear any closer affinity to him than that of a friend, she could not suppose he would be so unlike men in general, as not soon to find some other object on whom to bestow his noble heart; and it was even possible that some little pique at the seeming inconsistency of her conduct might assist him in the transfer. But such is the weakness and waywardness of our nature, that the idea of his giving to another the affection that had been the pride and delight of her own heart, was an agony almost too great for her to bear.

One painful and imperative duty, however, still pressed heavily on her heart. She would feel herself deeply chargeable if Loraine were allowed to remain any longer than absolutely necessary, in the indulgence of hopes that were never to be realized; but how the task of divesting him of them was to be accomplished, she could not see. The duty, however, was to be performed, and trusting to being enabled to perform it in a befitting manner when the proper time arrived, she made a strong effort to compose herself, and rising prepared for going down stairs. She braided her hair, and then dressing with the greatest simplicity, proceeded to the library, which was the room in which the family most commonly met. On entering it, she found Eloise extended on a settee, and her anxious mother seated by her side,

Mrs. Deland told Mary in a whisper that the invalid had been seized almost immediately on coming down stairs, with one of those deep swoons to which she had of late been so subject, and was only just recovering from it. Mary bent over the sufferer with a look of tender sympathy, and though something whispered her that the relief she had offered was too late, she could not but rejoice that she had made the sacrifice. As she was thus watching, a servant came to say that Mr. Loraine was in the parlor. Eloise, on hearing his name, cast her eyes around to see where her mother was, and finding that she had, at that moment, gone to the other part of the room, she said in a soft whisper—

"You will not betray me, Mary?"

"How could you imagine such a thing?" returned Mary, with the utmost tenderness, and stooping she kissed her cold forehead.

"Mary! dear!" said Mrs. Deland, "you must have Loraine all to yourself, for the present, and I suppose," she added, with a faint smile, "you will be found sufficient for the purpose of entertaining him. Go to him, my daughter!" she added, in a more serious tone, as the anxiety of the mother revived on her turning her eyes again on her almost inanimate child, "and excuse my non-appearance by telling him of Eloise's sickness; and indeed I believe he will think the messenger is not much better herself. My poor child!" she continued, as she looked at Mary's almost colorless face, "I am afraid my anxiety about Eloise has made me inexcusably careless about you, for I did not till this moment notice that you look as if you had just risen from a bed of sickness."

Mary endeavored by making an effort to speak in a cheerful tone, to allay her aunt's fears respecting herself, and then proceeded with trembling steps and beating heart to the parlor. Loraine rose as she entered, and the moment he cast his eyes on her face he darted forward, and taking her hand in both his, inquired in a tone of the most touching tenderness if she were ill.

Mary with great truth attributed her agitation to Eloise's distressing state.

"It is undoubtedly," said the young man, "a melancholy thing to see an amiable and beautiful young creature sinking into the grave, as she is evidently doing; but remember, dearest Mary, that your own health is of infinite value, and must be taken care of. It is not all your own property, you know," he continued, smiling as he led her to a seat and placed himself close by her side; "and, therefore, you have no right to sport with it." He then observing the

state of nervous irritability that she was in, deemed it best to endeavor to lead her mind from the cause, be it what it might, and with all the tender wiles of love he sought to win her from herself by a variety of anecdotes. Among the rest he was led by some accidental circumstance, to describe the ceremony he had witnessed in Italy of a young lady taking the veil; and added after he had done, "it was so painful a sight to behold a young creature in the very morning of life thus entomb herself, that it actually made me feel melancholy for two or three days after."

"I would give the world could I feel a vocation to follow her example," said Mary, with a deep sigh.

"The vocation, dearest Mary! which I trust you have received," said the lover, in a tone of soothing tenderness, "whilst it is more consistent with the energy and activity of your character, is not, I trust, less favorable to the cause of piety and virtue."

"I do not," returned the pale and trembling girl, "entirely accord with you."

The lover fixed his eyes on her face with a look of painful investigation, but seeing nothing in her countenance short of the most intense earnestness and soul touching distress, he exclaimed in a voice of agitation, "Mary! what am I to understand by this language? I have never yet uttered the words 'I love' to you, or any woman living, because I had a sort of implied engagement with my mother, before I left home, that I would wait till I had, at least, six month's acquaintance with the object of my choice before I addressed such words to her; but I have in a thousand ways told you how infinitely dear you were to my heart. Yes! Mary! you must have long ago seen in my every look, and in every action, how entirely my soul is locked up in you, and yet you never gave me any reason to suppose that my devotion was displeasing to you. How then, best beloved of my heart! can you reconcile your present language with all that has passed? I am sure it is impossible that you can ever condescend to act the part of a coquette!"

Poor Mary sat in a state of the most agonizing distress. She knew that all he had said was perfectly true, and that he had a right to accuse her of the most flagrant and cruel injustice; and yet it was impossible for her to give any explanation of the cause of this seemingly shameful conduct. Trembling to such a degree that she could scarcely support herself on her seat, she remained silent, with her eyes fixed on the floor. At length Loraine, taking her passive hand and pressing it to his lips with fervor, said—

"My confidence in your purity and virtue, my own best beloved; nay, more, my belief in the noble integrity of your mind is such that I am persuaded it must be some idea of making a pious sacrifice that impels your present conduct; but remember, my Mary, that no service can be acceptable to God which involves a dereliction of principle, or a disregard of the duties we owe to our fellow creatures! Let me entreat you, therefore, to examine well the reasons you have for acting as you seem now disposed to do! Surely Mr. and Mrs. Deland could not have required such a sacrifice from you!"

"Oh! no! no!" cried Mary, with energy. "They

are unconscious of my intention, and must if possible ever remain ignorant of the motive."

"What then is it? Surely, my beloved, you will not deny me the trifling gratification of knowing what the power is to which I am expected to yield?"

"I cannot! dare not tell! And if you love me as you say you do; if one throb of humanity ever entered your bosom, cease, I entreat you, to urge me any further!" and as she spoke she raised to his face her beautiful eyes, from which the tears were streaming.

"But can you expect me," expostulated the lover, "to resign the dearest hopes that ever filled my breast without an effort to retain them? Can you imagine that I could give up a nearer view of Heaven than I had ever dreamed of earth's being able to afford, without struggling to hold the possession? Let me know the power to which I am expected to submit, and I promise you, solemnly, that if I find you have not been carried away with an overstrained conception of duty, I will yield with the same humble submission which you are yourself exercising."

"Oh! It is impossible! I am bound by a solemn promise, and all that I can do is to beg that you will forget me."

"Forget you, Mary!" exclaimed Loraine, with energy. "As well might you ask me to live without breathing, or to see after my eyes had been plucked out, as ask me to cease to love you. No! Mary! you are so closely woven with all the strings of life, that I can only cease to love when I cease to exist. Give me, then, at least the pledge that you will not bind yourself by any promise which would separate us forever, for the next six months, and I will endeavor to be satisfied."

"Alas!" replied Mary, in a voice of heart-broken sadness, "it is too late! I have already given the promise, and never can be yours!"

Loraine, who had risen in the excitement of feeling, turned as pale as death, tottered a few steps, and but for being near the mantel-piece, of which he caught hold, would undoubtedly have fallen. Mary on hearing the sound of his tottering steps raised her drooping head, and seeing the state he was in, flew to him.

"Dear Loraine!" she exclaimed, as she put her arm within his, and looked up in his face with all the tenderness and affection of her nature; "compose yourself, I entreat you! For my sake compose yourself! For, believe me, the burden I have to bear is already too heavy for my strength; and needs not the additional misery of seeing you suffer thus!" Making an effort to recover himself, the lover looked at her with an expression of delight as these involuntary effusions of affection burst from her lips.

"Yes! my beloved one," he said, whilst his eyes rested on her in all the radiancy of delighted affection, "I will be all and everything you desire, only tell me that the promise you have given is not such as to bind you to another."

"Oh! no! never! never! will I belong to another! Since I cannot be yours, Loraine, my only prayer will be that I may be so far purified from the grosser passions of human nature as to be fit to devote myself

wholly to the service of God. And if such should ever be my happy state, and I am able to pray for you, Lorraine"—but here her agitation completely overcame her power of utterance, and leaning her head against his arm she sobbed in agony.

"My Mary! my own best beloved! we shall yet be happy. God will not countenance the separating of two hearts so sweetly, so firmly united. This cruel bondage, be it what it will, He will break, I am sure He will, and I shall yet have the bliss of calling you mine." And as he spoke, he attempted to pass his arm around her waist that he might fold her to his heart. But the effort immediately aroused Mary to her recollection, and disengaging herself from him, she re-seated herself with a look of composure and dignity that he at once wondered at and admired.

"This agitating conversation," she said, after a short pause, "is painful and injurious to us both; and the sooner it is terminated the better. Indeed I must beg that you will go," she continued, pressing her hand upon her head as she spoke, "for I feel unable to support myself any longer."

"I will go, my beloved," he said, "but this must not be the last time of my seeing you. A vow so suddenly extorted, and so hastily given as this must have been, (for last night when I left you your spirits appeared as light, and your mind as disengaged as usual) must not be yielded to without investigation. I cannot resign all my hopes of happiness without inquiring into the necessity. I must consult Mr. Deland upon—"

"Oh! no," interrupted Mary, clasping her hands together, and holding them up in a supplicating attitude. "If you have any care for my future peace of mind, let me entreat you not to mention it to him, or any one. Promise me this, Lorraine, or you know not how miserable you will make me."

"I do promise you, my sweet one," returned he, struck with pity at the look and tone of alarm with which she spoke. "But say that I shall see you again. And if your resolution still remains the same, that I shall at least have the satisfaction of receiving my fiat from your own lips. Till then I shall still hope your vow may be revoked, and I be made happy."

"It is registered in Heaven!" said Mary, solemnly, "and my fate is sealed! Farewell then, dear Lorraine," she continued, with dignity. "Pray for me, that I may become pure enough to be worthy of the vocation I aspire to; and let me hear soon that you are happy." As she spoke, she held out her hand, which the young man was about to take, but impelled by an impulse which he could not restrain, he folded her in his arms, pressed her fondly to his heart, and imprinted a kiss for the first time in his life on her pure but colorless lips.

"Farewell! thou most perfect, most beloved of beings. Farewell till we meet again." And releasing her from his arms, he rushed out of the room.

"Oh! farewell forever!" cried Mary, and sinking on a chair, she covered her face with her hands and sobbed aloud. The state of agitation, however, that she had been in for so large a portion of the day, had so exhausted her that even this natural vent to her feelings soon dried up, and being exceedingly faint

and anxious, at the same time to avoid observation, she retired to her chamber, where, after reposing for an hour or two, and again offering up her supplications for fortitude and resignation, she succeeded in regaining such a degree of composure as enabled her to rejoin the family without increasing the anxiety of her kind friends, by any additional alarm on her account.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON returning to the library, Mary found Eloise still lying much in the same state, and learned that her situation had given so much alarm to her parents, that unknown to her they had sent off for the physician. His arrival seemed to agitate and distress the invalid exceedingly, and it was with difficulty that her mother could prevail upon her to answer any of his questions. As he was the friend, however, as well as the physician of the family, he remained some hours, and whilst apparently engaged in conversation with the others, took opportunities of watching his patient when off her guard, and at length having satisfied himself with respect to her condition, he rose to go. Mr. and Mrs. Deland both followed him to the door, when he declared it to be his decided opinion that the seat of her disease was in the mind, and recommended travelling as soon as the season would permit, as the most likely means of restoring her health. Fully approving of the prescribed cure, though not believing in the supposed cause, the anxious parents returned to the library; when the father, bending over his daughter, said, with his usual gentle playfulness, "Eloise, the doctor ascribes your sickness to disappointment at Ellison's departure."

"And let him. He is welcome," said the invalid, languidly.

"Well, take care of yourself, my sweet, little daughter," said the kind father, as he stroked the luxuriant flaxen ringlets from the marble brow of his beloved child, "and do not break your heart because that self-willed man would not stay to be laughed at; and, as soon as fine weather comes, we will go and take a long journey. Perhaps we may even visit that far-famed country which this strange man comes from."

"I shall see a much better country before that time," replied the daughter. Mary looked at Eloise and wondered how she could thus distress her father, who immediately made an excuse for leaving the room to hide, as Mary was well assured, the agitation she had excited. This wonder was the greater as she was convinced from all that had passed, that the invalid did not really believe herself to be in danger, nay, that she even flattered herself that if Lorraine were once divested of all hope of Mary's ever being his, a revival of the preference which she believed he had once bestowed upon her would be the natural consequence, and in the generosity of her heart, Mary determined that she would never in any way be the means of obstructing such a consummation.

From this time little occurred to disturb the quiet monotony of their lives. Lorraine had for a week or

two written almost daily to Mary, using every argument that affection could prompt to induce her to change her resolution; and when he failed in this to beg to be permitted another interview before he left the country, as it was his intention shortly to do. But she pleaded so pathetically to be spared the trial, and represented so strongly the ineffectualness of such a meeting, that he generously gave up his own wishes for the sake of sparing the feelings of the being he so fondly loved. The change which had taken place between these young people of course had not passed unobserved by Mr. and Mrs. Deland, but such was their confidence in the prudence and right feeling of this beloved child of their adoption, that they determined not to distress her with questions as long as she remained silent on the subject; so that when a note came to Mrs. Deland from Lorraine, taking leave of herself and the rest of the family, and thanking them in the handsomest manner for their kindness, she simply expressed her regret for his loss, but without saying anything that seemed to call for an explanation. Still, however, she could not divest herself of the suspicion that Mary had acted precipitately in consequence, perhaps of some little pique, and thus been guilty of an act of injustice, which would ere long bring with it the bitter pangs of repentance, which to a mind so acutely sensitive would, she feared, destroy the springs and energies of life. And indeed it would have been difficult for a stranger to determine which of these lovely beings was likely to be the first to repose in her place of rest, for though Mary still moved about, and zealously shared with her aunt the office of nurse to Eloise, the color had almost entirely forsaken her cheeks, her form was rapidly wasting, and the step which had so lately been all lightness and elasticity, was now slow and languid; whilst the sweet music of her voice was scarcely ever heard. In vain for her did the days begin to lengthen, and the light green of the maple and the willow put forth. No longer did she notice the tulip shaped buds of the hickory, welcome the green bulbs of the daffodil, or hail the little blue birds that came to speak to them of spring. Spring, the approach of which she had been wont to watch with so much delight. Spring, the season of flowers, those sweet personifications of every beautiful idea, had now no charms for her. Eloise was fast sinking into a youthful tomb, and though Mary never could regret the effort she had made to save her, she felt that her all of earthly happiness had been sacrificed in vain. Her aunt and uncle, with a sort of tacit acknowledgment that the thing was hopeless, had ceased to speak of travelling, and had, contrary to their previous intentions, sent for Adelaide from school; while Theodore, who had been for the last few months on business for his father in the South, was urged to hasten home. All these things Mary looked upon as certain indications that they considered Eloise's life drawing near to a close; but to the young invalid herself they only appeared as natural preparations for the absence from home that had been so long contemplated; and though she was now too weak to sit up in a chair unsupported, she still talked of getting well as the weather became warmer, nor ever even to Mary spoke of death, or

her wish to die, as she had formerly done. Indeed she astonished Mary exceedingly, one day, by asking if she knew whether Lorraine were still in England, and whether she thought it probable that they would see him should they visit that country. Mary felt surprised, and even shocked at the state of mind that these questions evinced; but ever kind and considerate, she attributed it to the weakness of disease, and pitied instead of blaming the sufferer.

Mr. Deland one day entered the library where his wife, Mary and Adelaide were all seated around the couch of the invalid. "I have," said that parent, "just received a very important epistle, and as it is a general concern I will read it aloud." But to make the intelligence understood, we must premise a short explanation. Mrs. Deland's father, and of course Mary's grandfather, had been a very rich planter in St. Domingo, before the revolt of the blacks in that country, and had several years previous to the period of which we are speaking, authorized a gentleman fully qualified, for the business, to see after the recovery of the claims he had on the French government, in consequence of the immense losses he had sustained by the revolution; and the letter which Mr. Deland read was from that gentleman, saying that the money was received, and he only waited for instructions to forward it.

"Let us all go to Paris together to get it!" cried Eloise, with as much animation as though she were in the hey day of health and vigor. "And as expense will not now be an object of so much consideration, Adelaide too can be of the party. Hurry ma and Mary, to get ready, and I will hurry to get well. You two heiresses will really have a delightful errand to Paris, to go and receive your fortunes." As she spoke, she turned to those she addressed with a look of surprise at their silence, and was struck at the sight of the big tears that trembled in the eyes of each, while Adelaide cast her eyes on the floor as if at a loss how to look. There are times when the mind remains abtusely insensible to the most self-evident truths, and others again when trifles light as air in an instant strike conviction to the heart. And thus it was with the dying girl. In a moment the book of fate was opened before her, and she read her own approaching death in clear and legible characters.

A scream escaped her as the reality of her situation presented itself to her mind, and she covered her face with her thin, white hands, as if to shut out the frightful truth. Her father, unable to encounter the painful scene, had left the room; and Adelaide, anxious at all times to act the comforter to her almost idolized parent, had immediately followed him; whilst as if by one impulse Mrs. Deland and Mary sunk on their knees by the side of the couch. Long and earnestly did they pray for the poor sufferer; and when at length in compliance with her request they arose, they found her countenance composed, but a dark and settled gloom pervaded her every feature. From that time she scarcely ever spoke to any one, further than to answer any question that was put to her respecting her personal wants. This state of mind was exceedingly distressing to all, but especially to her gentle amiable and truly pious mother, for in spite of all her

maternal fondness, she could see nothing in it but the frowardness of a spoiled child; which, though obliged to submit, was too wayward to do so without grumbling at that which it could not resist. And such had ever been Eloise's disposition. She had never learned to discipline her mind to the pious duty of submission. All her excellence lay in the possession of those qualities which gave her such dominion over those around her, that they were willing to be led by her, so that she, perhaps, unknown to either herself or Mary, had been a powerful instrument in the hand of Providence in the formation of that perfect pattern of humility and gentleness that her cousin had ever exhibited. For a considerable time Mr. and Mrs. Deland watched with great anxiety to see their beloved invalid discover some signs of wishing for the services of a clergyman, and had often consulted together on the duty of proposing to her to send for one; but as often parental tenderness shrunk from the idea of distressing and agitating her. They were, however, very much relieved by the arrival of Theodore, for whom Eloise had always evinced a great partiality, as well as a degree of deference that she but seldom discovered for any other person. And it was with unspeakable delight that they saw, after he had been at home a few days, and had devoted himself as he did most unremittingly to the comfort and support of his dying sister, that a gradual change evidently took place in her countenance and manner. At first affection, unassisted by religion, might have hesitated in pronouncing the alteration to be for the better, for she only became agitated and restless instead of gloomy and composed; but the parents knew the human heart too well not to see in that uneasiness the awakening of conscience, the only sure preparation for penitence and pardon; nor was it long before their suspicions were confirmed by Theodore's requesting his father to send for a clergyman. Though there was not one within several miles of them, he obeyed the summons in an incredibly short time. He spent several hours with the dying girl, and when at length he took his leave, he left her calm, placid and resigned. No cloud now rested on her lovely countenance, she trusted she had made her peace with her Maker, and was consequently at peace herself, and with all the world. As if Providence had kindly spared her till Theodore's return, that her parents might have all their children to support and comfort them, she gently breathed her last, whilst her brother and Mary, who were both sitting beside her at the time, believed she was yet sleeping.

CHAPTER IX.

EIGHT months had passed over since the young and beautiful Eloise had been laid in her peaceful grave, over which the lily, the province rose, and the exquisitely pure japonica had each bloomed in succession, under the watchful care of Mary and Adelaide, and had each in their turn withered and died like her beneath them. Even the white cluster rose, which seemed for a long time determined to resist the howling storms of winter, and had clung to the white marble stone that stood at the head of the grave, as if

in imitation of the hope of the Christian, had been at last obliged to give way, and a sheet of snow, cold and white as she it enshrouded, had long covered the spot where they had been. The first bitter tears had given way to a soft and not unpleasant sadness. The father's manly spirit had again revived, and the mother's sweet and gentle nature had again begun to find relief in her duties and her religion. Adelaide had returned to school; and Theodore, whose grief for the death of a sister, who had ever marked him with distinguished tenderness, had again began occasionally to mix amongst his young companions. The money from France had been received, which, however, Mary would gladly have declined taking any of, though the sum was sufficient to place her not only in a state of independence but of affluence, had not her uncle positively insisted upon its being properly invested in her own name, and at her own disposal. The death of Eloise had been deeply felt by Mary, for they had been so closely united during the whole of their lives, that when deprived of her it had seemed as though she had lost a part of herself; and as from this, and her other cause of deep rooted sorrow, her health continued rapidly to decline, her kind friends began to be seriously apprehensive that it would not be very long before she again rested by the side of her who had been her companion through life. On her account, therefore, they once more began to talk of travelling as soon as the spring should unfold its flowery breast to be fanned by soft breezes. Mary, however, invariably objected to the proposition, declaring that her only wish was to remain as much as possible in the quiet seclusion of home. Earnestly had she prayed to be enabled to regard him, who had so long possessed her whole heart, in the light only of a brother; but in vain, for her heart was as fondly and devotedly engrossed by the same object as ever. She was one day sitting alone, for Mr. and Mrs. Deland were gone to pay a visit of sympathy to an old friend, who had, like themselves, deposited a beloved child in the grave, when she was aroused from the melancholy musings in which she had been long engrossed, by the sound of sleigh bells. Expecting to see her aunt and uncle, though surprised at their early return, she went to the window and caught a slight glance of a gentleman in deep mourning, crossing the piazza and about to enter the front door. A certain alertness in the step convinced her it was not her uncle, and her next thought was to escape to her chamber to avoid the sight of a stranger; but before she had time to do this the parlor door opened, and she beheld Loraine.

The suddenness of the surprise, we might almost say shock, united to the weak state of her bodily frame, was too much for her, and she sunk instantly in a state of insensibility on the floor. She had lain in that situation for a considerable time, when gradually sounds, sweet as the voices of angels, seemed to be floating in the air and falling softly on her ear, and by degrees she distinguished the words, "Mary, my beloved! My adored Mary! open those beautiful eyes, and let me see that you live!" Scarcely knowing whether all was not a dream, Mary attempted to raise her head from the sofa on which Loraine had

placed her, and to look around. In a moment the lover in a transport of joy clasped her in his arms. "My love! my wife!" he exclaimed, as he held her passionately to his heart, "say that you forgive the pain I have caused you, and that you are now well and as happy as your devoted lover!" Mary, now fully restored to consciousness, disengaging herself from his embrace, walked with an air of offended dignity to a chair at some little distance, and sat down in silence. Loraine stood for an instant, transfixed and stupefied; but the unequivocal proof that he had just had of his power over her heart, happily came to his recollection, and drawing a chair gently to her side, he said, "can you wonder, my beloved! that my delight at once more seeing you, should have driven me a little beyond the bounds of mere etiquette?"

"You seem to have forgotten," returned Mary, both speaking and looking with chilling coldness; "that the barrier which exists between us, makes this language altogether improper."

"I am not come without my credentials, Mary!" he replied, with mildness, but not without an air of offended feeling. "I have a letter here," and as he spoke, he took one from his pocket, "written with a dying hand, by one whom I mourn as sincerely as ever brother mourned a beloved sister. Read it, Mary! and you will see that I have not acted from mere head-strong impetuosity." Mary took the letter, and as well as her agitation would permit, she read the following:—

"TO CHARLES LORAINÉ, ESQ.

"The near approach of death, which calls for a strict self-examination, has at length made me sensible of my cruelty and injustice toward one of the noblest and loveliest of human beings. Loraine I am dying, and before we meet again I shall have risen above the little feelings of humanity, which would blush at the acknowledgment I am now about to make, even though it were to perform an act of duty, and to make restitution to the injured. I have loved you, Loraine! Since the first evening we met you have had entire possession of my heart; and never having been in the habit of practising the difficult task of submitting, the fatal passion soon acquired an uncontrollable power over my mind. I struggled, but, alas! my struggle was not to subdue, but merely to conceal, and when at last Mary became acquainted with the nature of the poison that lay at my heart, and generously offered to resign all her fond hopes of happiness for my sake, I was so wicked, so

selfish, so unprincipled as to accept the sacrifice, in the vain and foolish hope that when convinced you could never possess her, you might turn your thoughts toward me. The result was what might have been expected, and what I deserved; and I now thank my God that he did not grant success to my plans, and thus lead me on, step by step, to a deeper and darker course of sin. Mary has ever since been the affectionate friend, the tender nurse, and the uncomplaining sufferer; her heart, I can see by her pale cheek and wasted form, is still yours, and I trust she will be rewarded for all she has endured, by that sweet union which two such hearts are alone calculated to secure. "Farewell, Loraine! Forgive and pray for me; and if the departed have the power of watching over those who still remain behind, you and she whom you so fondly love, will ever be the objects of the tenderest care of Eloise.

"Theodore will forward this letter to you as soon as the last sigh has escaped my bosom."

When Mary had finished reading this letter, she put her handkerchief to her eyes, and gave vent to a violent gush of tears. Loraine left her for a time to indulge this natural burst of feeling; but as her emotion began to subside, he said with tenderness, "you see, dearest, I have not acted without authority; and there is now nothing to oppose my calling you mine."

But before Mary had time to reply, her uncle and aunt returned from their ride. A succession of surprises, however, seemed to await the agitated girl this morning, for instead of expressing astonishment at the sight of Loraine, they received him as one who had been much longer in coming than they had expected; and she soon learned that Theodore had, at his sister's request, shown her letter to his parents after her death, and that Mr. Deland had received a subsequent letter from Loraine, saying it was his intention to be with them in the course of a few weeks; but her relatives with their usual consideration had avoided giving Mary any intimation of these things, from a conviction that it would be more agreeable to her feelings to receive them from her lover himself. And not a little had they congratulated themselves on the course they had pursued, as the long time he was in making his appearance had begun to raise an alarm in their minds, even for his life itself. Two successive shipwrecks had indeed put that life in no small danger; but now he was come, and it is scarcely necessary for us to add, that after a proper time had elapsed, he was united to his beloved Mary.

THE WIFE.

A TALE OF MEXICO.

BY MAYNE REID.

"ONE—two—three—six—yes, it is just now six years, Inez—six short, happy years since that most happy day of my life when you promised to make me blessed—and well have you kept that promise, Inez—yes, well have you kept it. You have been to me all that the most favored husband could wish, kind, constant and truthful; and the slight, yet painful fears that I once had of you, Inez, have all perished before six years of unwavering fidelity. All—all!"

The husband kissed the forehead of his young and beautiful wife—a slight blush was on the cheek of Inez. He saw it and continued—

"Fears did I say, Inez? Do not misunderstand me—not fears that you, my wife, should ever prove false to your marriage vow. No, Inez, such a thought could never gain admission in this heart. Too well know I thy purity of heart, thy soul of honor—it was not this, but sometimes, I confess me, the painful suspicion would cloud my mind, that—that—before our happy but somewhat unequal union, your heart might have been given to some more youthful lover."

The blush upon the cheek of Inez became deeper, and her eyes were suddenly averted.

"It was a hard lot thine, sweet girl, to be linked with one who might seem thy father—a hard lot, and for the first years of our marriage I did repent me for thy sake, Inez—for thy sake. I have done all that a husband could do to cheer your path over what might be a thorny road. All that my wealth could purchase you have controlled—have I not been kind to you, Inez?"

"You have, sir—you have——"

"I would not be so unkind now as to remind you of this, but to say my heart, Inez, is full—full of happiness—you have far more than outdone me in kindness, in faith, in your gentle and constant devotion; and when I look into your eyes as now, and kiss your sweet lips, and hold you in my arms thus, as on the day of our bridal, the old soldier, Inez, feels his youth returning. I feel myself the happiest man in the valley of Mexico."

General Leon gazed long and lovingly in the eyes of his beautiful wife. At intervals he kissed the white Castilian brow and the blushing cheek. They sat for some time in silence. His happiness was too full to allow him its further expression in words. The thoughtful manner of Inez betrayed a strange admixture of feelings, in which, perhaps, duty and gratitude predominated. The picture was by no means strange or uncommon—a scene enacted every day. Youth and beauty in the embrace of age and wealth. And yet you could not call Leon an old man. There was no sign of old age in the glance of that keen, dark eye,

and though the brow was slightly furrowed, and the hair silvered, it was the work of many a campaign; and that form was still firm and unbending, and that step still preserved the springy elasticity of youth. No, Leon was not an old man. He might have passed his forty-fifth year. It was the contrast, however, that struck you, for she was certainly not over twenty-three. She had married, as is the custom of her land, in the precocity of almost childhood—and according to that custom too, where the bride's will has but little to do in the choice of the bridegroom. A story of every day life. A history of frequent occurrence. Inez was the daughter of a poor merchant. Leon was a general, distinguished and enriched by the revolutionary struggles of his unhappy country. He had retired from military life since his marriage, and devoted all his time to the happiness of his young wife. He loved her with his full heart. It was this very love, that during the first years of their wedded life, had rendered him wary, perhaps suspicious. His was not a blind devotion—for Leon was a man of the world, and had but little faith in the doctrine of woman's infallibility. His jealousy—if we might term it so—had never assumed a substantial form as it knew no object, and only sprung from the disparity of their years. The existence of such a feeling he had always scrupulously concealed from Inez, and it only existed in the earlier years of their marriage.

Now that six years of tried constancy had passed over, without one occurrence to ruffle the calm of his growing confidence, all these earlier suspicions had disappeared, and the old soldier began to think that his manhood and fame, perhaps—his unbounded and untiring kindness and devotion had reached the heart of his young wife, and that he was beloved in turn. This too is no uncommon chapter in the heart's history. There was nothing in the conduct of Inez that would seem to contradict this belief. If so, it might be that she seemed *too* faithful, too devoted to her unequal mate. The tongue of slander, however, which is no where more malignant than in the circles of Mexican society, had never whispered aught to her dishonor, and all that could be cavilled at in her character, was her strange but sweet melancholy. This dreamy thoughtfulness had been often remarked; and when one of her friends rallied her upon it, an effort on her part to shake it off or conceal it could easily be observed. This melancholy too had done much to keep alive the unhappy suspicions of Leon. Six years, however, and no change. "It must then," thought he, "be habitual, constitutional," and thus did the fond, doting husband fling himself upon the roses of a trusting affection.

The short dialogue, or rather monologue we have above recorded, occurred in the verandah of a beautiful mansion in Tacubaya. It was the month of August, when the wealthy families of Mexico desert their prison palaces in the city, to pass their summer hours in the sweet villages of San Angel, Ialpan, Tacubaya and Mizcoac. The house of Leon was one of the finest in Tacubaya, with all the advantages of a garden richly cultivated, fountains and bright shrubberies. Everything that wealth, and a cultivated taste could suggest, were so disposed as to make it a home worthy of the beautiful Inez de Mora. Leon and his young wife sat in the verandah. Articles of luxury lay around—everything likely to gratify the caprice of a beautiful woman. The great gate was open, as these were times of peace, under the administration of the wise Herrera. The scene was such a one as would lead to love its most romantic and poetical interest. Orange trees growing out of the marble pavement of the "patio," dropped their bright green leaves into a crystal fountain, that sprinkled them with the cool waters of the Southern Sierra. Red and gold fish played in the snow white basin. The loreto, perched upon the boughs of a sweet lemon tree, uttered its mimic cry; and two or three beautiful Indian pea-fowls stalked proudly around the fountain, vain of their dazzling shadows reflected in the smooth surface of the water. Leon felt the influence of the scene, and sat for a time with Inez in his arms, fondly gazing upon her beautiful face, and kissing her with a tender and confiding affection. A slight noise at the entrance to the patio roused him from his reverie of love. A foot was on the marble pavement, and after a short dialogue between the porter and some one at the gate, a servant in a rich livery entered.

The latter passing up the verandah after a respectful salute, handed a small billet to Dona Inez, and again bowing, turned and walked away as he had come. There was nothing unusual in this occurrence.

Inez opened the note and read it. It ran as follows:

"DEAREST INEZ.—On Sunday evening I intend giving a little masquerade. I will expect you of course with the General. Let me know before hand in what character you will come. At ten o'clock we will be ready to receive you. Yours,

LUISA GORDOA."

Inez handed the note to her husband with an exclamation of delight, tempered, however, with a slight anxiety as to the effect the invitation might produce upon him. An ill-concealed feeling of unhappiness appeared upon the countenance of the general as he ran his eye over its contents.

He folded the note and returned it with the simple observation—

"I never approved of these masquerades. They are among the worst of our national follies."

"But you will go, Leon?"

"Do you wish it, Inez?"

"How disappointed will Luisa be."

"The rich widow will have a thousand others to console her."

Inez was silent. Leon sat for a moment without

looking up. He was evidently embarrassed. After a pause he continued—

"But, dearest Inez, you wish to go to this ball—we shall go then—and when I bethink me it is two years since you attended one, I have been much to blame—forgive me, Inez, but I am so happy with you alone—these amusements cannot add to my happiness—with you it may be different."

Inez made no reply. The first refusal though slight, had checked her enthusiasm, and though wishing to go, she could no longer urge it. She had been wounded. Leon perceived this, and now in turn began to feign a desire to attend the masquerade, and a servant was dispatched to the Dona Luisa with a note accepting the invitation. Sunday evening came round, and Leon and his wife had made the necessary preparations for attending the masked ball, and now awaited the hour of ten o'clock. The servant announced the carriage in waiting, when Leon, who had been complaining during the day of a slight indisposition, felt the symptoms of his malady increase, and declared his intention to remain at home.

Inez commenced unwinding the rebose from her beautiful head and shoulders.

"No, Inez, you shall not remain—the carriage will let you down at the house of Luisa—she will look to you—"

Inez objected.

"Go," continued Leon, "or I shall be forced to accompany you at the risk of my health—go, dearest Inez, for I shall certainly not remain at your expense."

The young wife kissed her husband, and half reluctantly entering her carriage, was driven to the house of her friend. The general returned to his chamber, and after taking some medicine that stood upon the side-table, threw himself heavily upon his bed, but not to sleep.

There was a large assemblage at the house of the rich widow. Dona Luisa was still beautiful, a belle, and one of the leaders of fashion. Her house was the resort of the elegant and intriguing society of the Mexican capital. Inez was lost in the gay whirl of fashion. The life of domestic seclusion which she led as the wife of Leon, had wholly unfitted her for such society, and after two or three unsuccessful attempts to enjoy herself among the votaries of pleasure, she retired to a seat on one of the balconies that opened upon the gardens. Here she undid her mask, and breathed in the fresh air that came laden with the perfume of a thousand flowers. Leaning against the railing of the balcony, she sat gazing out upon a fountain that rippled and sparkled beneath the clear moonlight. She had not remained long in this position, when a form glided from among the dancers and dropped into a seat near her, and directly opposite. This person was disguised in a mask and black domino, but the voice was that of a man.

"Why so pensive, lady? Are you wearied with the dance already?"

"Sir!" said Inez, starting, for she had not until now perceived that she was not alone.

"You seem to take but little pleasure in these masquerading revels? One so beautiful as you—perhaps some memories of happier days—"

"Sir," muttered Inez, with indignation in her tone and manner, "I would be alone—will you favor me by seeking some other on whom to lavish your cheap flattery—leave me, sir!"

As she said this she re-adjusted her mask, which till now she had been holding in her hand.

"Ah! cruel—cruel Inez." A deep sigh escaped from the stranger. Inez started, and turning a scrutinizing look upon the disguised figure, said in a half whisper—

"Who are you, sir, that you know me?"

"Who does not know the beautiful Inez Leon? I once knew Inez de Mora, knew her in her happy hours of childhood—in her spring of bright womanhood, when she would not thus have repelled—Inez, Inez, would that I had never known you!"

"Oh! Sir—Fernando—spare me—leave me."

"I will, Inez, but not now—one moment—one short respite from the agony of six years—one hour of that delirious joy your presence produces."

"Oh! Fernando, if you love me—if you ever loved me, be generous—leave me—leave me!"

"Loved you, Inez?—for six long years since that fatal night when you became a living sacrifice to wealth, to the idol of a parent's sacrifice—have I banished myself from you—but never could I banish your image from my heart—in the camp—in the battle-field—through the long campaign your memory has sustained me—the memory of our young love—but now to return to see you once again—to hear you pronounce my name—to press—"

"Nay, do not—Fernando, for your life. Oh! let us part forever—forever!"

"In one hour I shall go hence—perhaps never to return—do not deny me the only solace of long suffering years—tell me, Inez—tell me, do you still love me?"

"Oh! it is sinful."

"It was sinful to rob me of my rightful love. Say it, Inez—give me at least this consolation—it will cheer me through the absent hours—say it, Inez."

Inez was for a moment silent struggling with her feelings. The tone, the manner of the young man was one of extreme agony, and it touched her to the heart. Would she suffer him to depart without this assurance, to him so dear? To her how little did it cost—how little? Not little. In this lay the secret of her melancholy life. Love struggled with duty. The strife was soon over. Leaning forward, so that her face almost touched the mask of the stranger, she whispered in a trembling voice—

"Fernando, my heart is unchanged."

The young officer started with a thrill of delight, and in the wild gush of passionate excitement, he caught the small, white hand half unresisting, and carried it to his lips.

A dark figure interposed—a strong arm struck the hand from his lips, a deep curse was heard from the intruder, who seizing the slender waist of Inez, hurried her from the house. The wheels of a carriage rattled along the pavement and stopped at the house of General Leon.

The young man did not awake from his surprise until Inez had disappeared. It was too late to follow.

He who had carried her off had, doubtless, the right. Strange consolation.

Leon sat in the hall of his house, apparently reading the "Diario." His thoughts were not upon the paper or the matter it contained. The stern and rigid look—the compression of his thin lips, spoke of some secret and firm resolve. At intervals his glance turned upon a small door, which opened toward his wife's chamber. It was late in the day, and Inez had not yet made her appearance. He had sent for her. The door at length opened, and the young wife entered the room pale and suffering, but through her anguish there shone a look of proud innocence. She seated herself upon a sofa without turning her eyes upon her husband. There was a painful moment of silence interrupted by Leon.

"You have broken down in one moment the hopes, the confidence which it had taken years to establish—you have destroyed the only illusion of my miserable life—you have betrayed the sacred—"

"Sir—"

"Nay—nay—explanations are of no use now—thinkest thou I have neither eyes nor ears?—thinkest thou that I am likely to play the fool of a doting husband?—no, madam, your intrigue has ended—and your villainous paramour has not another day to live—for you I shall take better care of hereafter."

A stifled scream of anguish—a proud look of defiance, such only as wronged and insulted innocence can give, was the only reply.

Leon gazed for a moment upon his beautiful wife—in his eyes now too painfully beautiful, and with a stride of bitter determination he left the room. As he passed out of the great doorway the porter, at a sign from his master, locked the gate and disappeared. Every house in Mexico is a prison. Inez was a prisoner.

Leon strode on chafing with himself as he went. A carriage stood ready in the piazza of the village. Entering this, he ordered the driver to take him to the city. The carriage stopped in front of a large hotel in the Calle Correo. Leon, by inquiry, had ascertained that here the young officer of his last night's adventure stopped. He descended from the carriage, and without asking any questions from the porter, passed in and walked up stairs. In a few seconds he found the room occupied by the object of his search.

The young man started up from a table where he had been engaged in writing, and confronted his visitor, whose want of ceremony at entering somewhat surprised him.

"Who are you, sir?" asked the officer.

"That you shall know in time—first let me make secure against your escape."

Leon locked the door, putting the key in his pocket, from which he drew forth a pair of pistols.

"Do you mean to assassinate me?" asked the young man, in a tone of deliberate calmness.

"Sir, I am a gentleman, although you are not—choose one of these pistols."

"And for what?"

"That you will understand when I remind you of your base conduct at the masquerade."

"General Leon—for I presume you are he—reflect, sir—you do me a wrong."

"Take the pistol, sir."

"I cannot fight you, sir."

"Cannot!—you are a coward, sir, as well as a scoundrel—take the weapon, sir, and do not make me a murderer."

"I am no coward, General Leon."

"Then, sir, act like a man."

"You shall have your wish."

Almost involuntarily the young officer took one of the pistols from the hand of his adversary and stepped back. The breadth of the room, about six paces, separated them. "One—two—three—fire!" These words were hastily uttered by Leon, and with the last the bullet from his pistol harmlessly passed the head of his adversary and lodged in the wall.

"If you wish to try it again I will change pistols with you—mine is still loaded."

Leon gnashed his teeth with rage, as he flung his pistol upon the floor; then grasping his sword, he drew it, and called upon the officer to "fire and defend himself." Fernando flung the loaded pistol upon the table, and drawing his sword stood on the defence. After a few passes, the sword of Leon fell upon the floor. Thus foiled and disarmed in a double sense, Leon ran toward the table for the remaining pistol, intending to use it on himself. By some fatality his eye fell upon the paper at which Fernando had been writing, and which he saw was addressed to himself. He read—

"GENERAL LEON—SIR—You may slight any explanation of the occurrence of last night. I do not wish to absolve myself. The friendship—the love of a whole life found its first expression for six years in that moment of imprudence for your wife. She is innocent—innocent of any anticipation of that meeting—innocent of having given any consent to the rude liberty of which you were the witness. I alone am guilty—on me then let fall the consequences.

EL CAPITAN FERNANDO."

Leon crushed the paper into his pocket, and rushed from the room.

About three years after the occurrences detailed above, one of those revolutions so common in Mexico broke out, and civil war raged in the capital of that devoted country.

It was mid-winter, and General Leon was residing in his house in the city, a fine palace in the

Calle Cadenas. Time, which softens and subdues the keenest pangs, had mellowed his sufferings, and if not happy, he had ceased to suffer the deep agony which he had felt after the occurrence of the masquerade. The zeal and devotedness of Inez—her attention to his slightest wishes, had in some degree restored confidence, if not happiness to his health, and the circumstances of the adventure at Tacubaya were never alluded to.

In the city of Mexico, in civil revolutions, men do their fighting from the cupolas of churches and convents, and from the roofs of their houses.

Among other houses that it became necessary for one of the contending parties to occupy with troops, was that of Leon. A company of soldiers had entered below at the great gate, which, having securely barricaded, they ascended to the azotia. This they occupied for several days, contending with their adversaries, who occupied some buildings at a distance.

The soldiers came down by turns into the house to cook their food, but in spite of all the invitations of Leon, their captain, whom Leon had never seen, refused to descend to the table. On the first day several wounded men were carried down from the roof, and attended by the servants of the general with the utmost care. Others were carried down on the following day. It was at last reported that the captain of the party had received a severe—perhaps a mortal wound—but still refused to leave his post on the azotia. Hearing this Leon used every entreaty, sending servant after servant to prevail upon the wounded officer to abandon his dangerous position and enter his house. The captain at length consented, his wound becoming worse. He was carried down into a chamber and placed upon one of the couches, where the old general and his servants attended upon him. Every hour brought the wounded man nearer his end. In those wasted and attenuated features—wasted not alone by wounds and loss of blood—General Leon did not recognize the Captain Fernando. A truer instinct taught the Dona Inez who was their guest. She leaned for a moment over the couch, and then fell lifeless upon the almost lifeless form of her first and only love. She was scarcely carried from the apartment when Captain Fernando breathed his last.

A few short years and Leon, broken-hearted, found rest in the grave. Inez preceded him, but hers was the grave of the maniac.

EDWIN GRAY.

BY G. V. MAXHAM.

CHAPTER I.

Yon mansion teems with legends for the heart,
Her lingering footsteps stays
Upon that threshold stone.

* * * She whose hand had made
That spot so beautiful with woven shade
And aromatic shrubs and flowers.—L. H. SIGOURNEY.

ELVERTON HOMESTEAD.

THERE, away through the brown twilight it stands, calm and beautiful. It still looks as in the days of yore, when oft upon its sunny threshold sat the gay-hearted young girl, Ida Elverton, with Edwin Gray, the playmate of her happy youth. How often they came out on the old porch to look up at the evening sky and read their mingled destinies in each deep and silent star, which, in their fancies, they deemed to be the golden symbols of that talismanic language which the angels of their youth had written upon the sibylline page of the Heavens. Oh, it would have done your soul good, if you could but have overheard their childish talk, as they sat there upon that threshold stone, weaving the woof of coming destiny, in bright golden thread, dyed by the gorgeous fancy of fervid youth. But the grim wizard Time, who with an iron pen is writing down continually the sad, strange history of each human heart, has since recorded a far different tale from that which they were wont to read upon the star-checked page of God's broad and silent sky. There is a strange, thrilling charm lingering about each silent star, as it comes out upon the wall of Heaven, and bares its burning breast to mortal gaze. Like a talisman, it summons from the sepulchre of the buried past, all blessed memories, pressed therein like flowers within a book. Like a torch-lamp, it swings within the dim door of our forgetfulness, recalling to the dull solitude of the present, the forms of beloved ones, whose music tones in other days were wont to mingle in our hearts worship around the hearth-stone of the affections. Like the gushing poetry of eloquence it fills the heart with dreams of inspiration—with high and noble impulses, giving it a strange longing for a brighter and more glorious sphere than that which is within these walls of earth. I too, in my youthful fancy, once did deem the golden stars to be a band of angels, wandering in the flowery fields of Paradise, and my young heart leaped to go and rove with them.

And there at the right of the old house, do you not see that orchard stretching far away through the evening mist, like a pleasant memory through the heart of sorrow? That old orchard teems with associations such as even now doth warm the chilled heart's blood, sending the ruddy flush of youth to this withered brow of mine. As I recall those glorious old

recollections—those golden types of a happy boyhood, I am once more the truant, stealing away from my parents sight, to sport in the deep, cool shade of those rough old trees. Oh, how often in the May-day of my youth have I sported beneath those broad, sheltering branches. How often behind each high old trunk have I played the guileless game of hide and seek; and oh! how often there have I heard the ringing laugh of girlhood, of Ida Elverton, the fairy genius of that sylvan play-ground, quivering upon the blue air and through this heart like the pleasant carol of a singing bird, or:

"Like golden ripples, hastening to the land,
To wreck their freight of sunshine on the strand."

And in the very heart of yon old orchard—you can see it even now, towering above all the rest—stands the dear russet apple tree, which in after years was the trysting place of Edwin and Ida. There are still the remains of a rude seat beneath its shade, while on its rough, worm-eaten bark are visible the initials—E. G., I. E., engraved long—long years ago. Almost across the gnarled roots of that old tree leaps a foamy brooklet, which even in the summer time has a pleasant song for every wanton clover blossom that bends to kiss its sparkling wave. On its green banks used to bloom the blue daisy and the yellow buttercup; and how often has the cunning Ida plucked one golden blossom to test its virtue upon this chin of mine, which e'er was smooth and soft as velvet.

Time has flown since. And days, and months, and years, like flakes of snow, had fallen upon the illimitable bosom of the ocean of rest, and had melted away and were no more. But they had brought a change, deep and glorious, to the youthful hearts of Edwin and Ida. Their youth had assumed the deeper flush of ripening age, and they were no more the unthinking play-mates sporting amid the golden shadows of life's summer day. But still the golden bow of hope, with its thousand airy tints of light and joy, spanned the misty ocean of the coming future.

Edwin and Ida were lovers. Time, who findeth out the measure of all things, had fully demonstrated it, and sometime Elverton Homestead wast to be made glad with their bridal scene, which was a thought dearly cherished by both. Beneath that trysting tree, in the still night, years ago, they had met to part awhile, and then the murmur of their troth-plight went up to the thick stars like a benison from the heart of joy.

Edwin, like too many of our young men at the present day, had a desire to try his fortune in the city. Yet there was little need of this, for his father was wealthy for a farmer, and he an only son. From the infancy of Edwin it had been a dearly cherished wish of Farmer Gray, that after he should have been called

to his fathers, this, the only scion of a long and honest stock, should take the old homestead, and till its broad and fertile lands—which he himself had tilled from boyhood, and which his fathers had cleared from the wild, wild wilderness, and made to bloom like a garden. It was a bitter thought for him to think that his good old farm should pass away into other, and perchance less careful hands.

In this land of industry and enterprise, our youth can never bide their time. Their feverish pulse and restless hearts are ever dragging the anchor of fate. They hear continually the hurrying to and fro in the mighty shock of action, and they grow eager to mingle in the strife. With hearts light and buoyant, but unskilled, they launch forth into the rolling current, and are soon lost amid the countless fleets of human life—all hurrying to one predestined end. Yet it is strange, very strange, that those who were born and have been bred in the country, should be so eager to seek our great and crowded marts. Young men, you who till the fertile valleys and the verdant hills of New England, oh, leave not your cottage home for the alluring temptations of the great city. You are now earth's noblemen, and your strong hearts send forth the vigorous pulse of ruddy life, but when you leave the spade and the ploughshare, and wend your way toward the city, oh, think that you are on the last earthly journey—on the homeward road that leads to death. Behind the thronged counters, and in the dull work-shops of the town, lingers a dread malaria—and the dense, impure atmosphere of her crowded streets, to you, accustomed from birth to breathe the pure air of the country, will prove far worse than the horrid simoon of the burning desert.

At the age of eighteen Edwin Gray went to Boston, and entered a counting-house. I left home about the same time, and heard no more from him, save two or three random letters, until nearly three years after, when on my return to our native town of Rhode Island I passed through the city of Boston.

CHAPTER II.

And lo! even like a giant wight
Slumbering his battle toils away,
The sleep-locked city, gleaming bright
With many a dazzling ray,
Lies stretched in vastness at my feet;
Voiceless the chamber and the street,
And echoless the hall;—
Had death uplift his bony hand
And smote all living in the land,
No deeper quiet could fall.—WM. MOTHERWELL.

MIDNIGHT IN THE CITY.

NIGHT and I were in the great city; and the pointed hands upon the dial-plates of time had already told the advent of that dim and shadowy hour, which like the branch of some mighty river, parts our to-days and yesterdays.

Not a sound of life was upon that midnight air. Silence, deep and terrible as death, had laid its iron fingers upon the pulse of the great heart—those hundred streets, which but a few short hours before were heaving beneath the mighty tramp of the struggling

tides of existence; and not one sight or sound that told of life or motion was abroad, save the lengthened shadow and the measured foot-beat of each stealthy watchman, as he walked his stated round. Boston, with all its homes of joy and grief, lay wrapped in solemn slumber, as an army on the tented field, sleeping away the weary bivouac and the toil of battle; while the pointed spires of many a gilded fane, arose toward Heaven from amid the solemn gloom, like silent prayers from hearts of sorrow.

I was wending my way undisturbed toward my boarding-house on Pearl street, when suddenly a light broke upon my view, gleaming for a moment like a twinkling star in a stormy sky, and then growing dim, until it was almost undiscernible in the pervading gloom. Curiosity prompted me to enter the building where it led. I stood in a long, narrow passage. The passage was untenanted, but through the distant space and gloom, came the low tone of eager voices, like the hoarse ripple of a far off stream. At the end of the passage I reached a short flight of stairs, at the head of this was a broad door standing ajar; and this being thrown open at the sound of my steps, I entered what I saw at once to be a gaming saloon. Were you ever in one?—if not, I pray you never enter one. The room was large, very large; and brilliantly lighted with myriads of silver lamps, that swung from the arched ceiling above, like stars in the blue firmament. Oh, it was a glorious scene within that room—a scene of gilded sin, and as it burst upon my vision with all its trappings of glittering wealth, it seemed like a dream of vanity playing on the fancy, and I almost deemed it such.

It contained all the implements of gaming, and its card and billiard tables were trimmed with crimson velvet and gold lace, which contrasted strongly, nay, almost fearfully, with the dark, solemn drapery, in which the room was hung. Had it not been for the costly carpets, the rich divans, the hundred founts of light, and the low, deep whisper, or the hoarse laugh of the devotees worshipping there, I could have deemed that dark drapery but the solemn weeds of mourning, and that room, teeming with liquid light, like the room of death.

The inmates of the apartment were mostly young men, though some of them had the appearance of being old in vice, while others seemed but as novices, who had just bent the knee for the first time, at the gilded altar of chance—the maelstrom of human passion, which swallows up all the higher and nobler impulses of God's immortal mind. This room, as I afterwards learned, was one of the largest gaming hells in Boston; but at the time in which I entered, there were not many playing, but mostly spectators. At the farther end of the room, I noticed a couple by themselves, wholly unregarded by the other occupants. As all the other tables were crowded, I thought that I would cross over and watch the progress of this game.

"This shall be my last game unless I win, for I have already lost nearly one hundred dollars this evening, and shall soon lose all if I continue playing, and there is no change of fortune. By Heaven! I will not go forth from this room penniless—a beggar

—this room where I have buried the fond hopes of my youth, and the hard earnings of long—long years of toil and abstinence. Oh, my God! the thought of this, and the memory of those days—the memory of that dear mother who, at the parting hour stood upon the threshold of my home, and said in tearful tones—‘Edwin, beware of evil company’—and the memory of her, the Ida of my youthful love—she whom I pressed to this panting bosom, and whispered, ‘I shall come again’—oh, this thought of beggary, and those dear memories of home, ring within my heated brain like a funeral bell that tells of death—I shall see that home again ah, nevermore!”

“Ha—ha—ha! rather a faint hearted crow that to come from the throat of a crack game-cock. Why man, take courage, and your luck will come again by and bye. Don’t you remember that favorite saying of mine, which is: ‘A faint heart never won a fair lady’—just keep that in view, and you will succeed well enough.”

The voice of the first speaker thrilled me strangely. Its author could not have been more than one and twenty years of age, yet upon his flushed brow nestled many a deep wrinkle, that told of carking passion and a stormy breast—of the fiery wine-cup—of the midnight revel and of the gaming-table, where the heart’s blood becomes cold and curdled in the continued excitement of hope and fear, and starts to and fro, not like the steady pulse of a strong man, but like the fitful start of a dying flame.

As I drew near the table at which he sat, I recognized in that flushed face, the once noble features of him—of Edwin Gray—the companion of many a happy hour—the playmate of my boyhood. The recognition crashed through my brain like the sudden shock of a thunderbolt quivering through a stormy sky.

It was evident that Edwin did not recognize me, and at that time, perhaps, it was for the best that he did not. I went behind where he sat, and looking over his shoulder, watched the progress of the game, which was loo, a simple game, but in the management of which a skilful player can take a great advantage by what is called “sleight of hand.” I soon perceived that Edwin must be the loser, for his antagonist, calm and collected, played with that consummate address characteristic of the perfect gambler, while my friend, powerfully excited and all of a tremor, played poorly and carelessly for one who was not a novice.

“Lost!” exclaimed Edwin, impetuously springing from his seat—“but thank Heaven, it shall be the last!”

“Oh, no! don’t give it up yet. Let us try another hand, and I am sure your luck will prove better. I will give you a great chance this time. I will give you odds—two to one—now, that is fair, come.”

Edwin hesitated for a moment, and then set himself down again at the fatal board. My heart prompted me to urge him to play no more, but I did not dare to, for fear that he would recognize me, and I did not wish for recognition until the coming morrow.

“Here are five dollars, and they are the last that I possess!” he exclaimed, in a suppressed voice,

throwing them upon the table. As he ceased speaking there was an expression to his countenance that was indeed fearful, and I trembled for the result. But his reckless antagonist seemed not to heed this sudden outbreak of passion, for he was too familiar with such scenes to be the least unnerved by them. The game was soon finished, and as I had expected, Edwin lost.

Oh! I shall never forget the issue of that awful game—even now it stares me to agony! Its victim sat for a moment still as death—but the steady, sullen glare of his red eye-balls, burnt to the soul. There was something so terrible upon that broad furrowed face—not the wild expression of madness, nor of insanity, but something so full of loneliness, and unutterable despair, that even that iron-hearted antagonist started back in horror. Oh! as I looked upon that vivid scene of human misery, cold, beaded drops of sweat stood out upon my brow, and the hot life-pulse quivered up to my brain swift as lightning, while in that great room, the beat of my heart was audible. But now there was to come a swift changing scene in the play of that night’s drama.

There was the sudden flash of a polished barrel—a sharp click, and a convulsive throw of the arm upward, and the muzzle of that deadly weapon bore upon the brain of Edwin Gray. Then, and not till then, did his horrid purpose burst upon my mind, and with a wild, eager grasp I clutched that upraised arm, but ere I could bear it from its fatal position, a gushing flame of fire—a ringing noise was in that room, and before it had died away, upon that tufted floor lay the form of a human being.

CHAPTER III.

—What I most prize in woman
Is her affection, not her intellect;
The world of the affections is thy world.

—In that stillness
Which most becomes a woman, calm and holy,
Thou sittest by the fireside of the heart
Feeding its flame. The element of fire
Is pure. It cannot change nor hide its nature,
But burns as brightly in a gipsy camp
As in a palace hall.—HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

THE LAST SCENE.

YEARS had passed away, and still there was no change in the heart of Ida Elverton. The holy flame of love burnt as bright and pure, as when she and Edwin Gray parted beneath yon old trysting tree. Time can change all things beside a woman’s love, and that is based upon adamant—something which no lapse of time, nor change of circumstances, nor life nor death can dissolve. The love of such a heart as beat in the breast of Ida Elverton is something infinitely better and more glorious to win, than the greatest laurels ever yet won by human being upon the fitful field of a nation’s honor, for they will surely fade and pass away, but such love endureth forever. Its province is alike the kingly palace and the thatched cottage. Its holy flame burns as brightly beside the truckle bed of the dying peasant, as beside the

royal purple couch of earth's proudest monarch. It believes all things—hopes all things—and endures all things without resistance, and goes not away—no, never. And now this queenly Ida was summoned to the death-bed.

* * * * *

Come with me awhile to the old homestead of Farmer Gray, for there ended the last scene in this humble tale—the self-made outcast had been welcomed home. It is but a little way from here; a stone's throw, for its broad fields border on those of Elverton Farm, and were it not for this dull evening mist, we could almost see its great chimneys even now. Oh, as I approach that old house, my heart grows eloquent with thronging memories of the good olden time. Now I can truly paint the last scene—the last scene in the fitful life of Edwin Gray. I remember that dying scene as though it were but yester-night.

We left Edwin Gray quivering upon the tufted floor of that gaming-hell in Boston; but that was not the death-quiver—the ball merely grazed the left temple, stunning him, but no more. And now he had been borne from the noise and din of the great city, to die in peace amid the pleasant relics of his boyhood, and at the home of his father's, for he knew that he could live but a little while longer, and it was

his wish to be buried at home, in the quiet little graveyard of R——.

There was a strange light in the still fountain of the eye—a flush upon the cheek—a hoarse cough, that told of consumption and of no human aid—and he was prepared to die. And now we were all gathered in this old homestead, friends, kindred and all around the bed of one whose lamp of light flickered dimly to and fro, and who, ere another morn would come, with its pleasant sun and singing birds, was to be upon his homeward journey to the land of spirits.

"Dear friends! raise me for a moment," he cried, "just a moment, that I may look through this uncurtained window once more, up to God's broad and silent sky. Ida, take this palsied hand of mine, and let us look together, as we used to in other and better days. Come, Ida—look!"

These were the last words of Edwin Gray—the next moment and Ida pressed a pulseless hand—a lump of clay. * * * * *

Ida Elverton still dwells here in the house of her childhood, and ever at the still hour of eventide, when the nightingale trills forth its plaintive song, she goes to wander in yon quiet home of the dead; for there, beneath the shade of a weeping willow, is the Mecca of her buried hopes.

VOICES FROM FLOWERS.

BY MRS. JOSEPH C. NEAL.

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VOICES FROM FLOWERS.

BY MRS. JOSEPH C. NEAL.

A WOMANLY love is the love of flowers,
With their soft and rich perfume,
'Tis a graceful task to rear and guard
Young plants as they bud and bloom;
And flowers can speak as in olden time,
Though no audible voices thrill,
Their velvet lips are not moved apart,
Yet their words can the silence fill.

This champney rose is a messenger
To tell of a Summer clime;
The orange buds bear in their snowy bells
The tones of a bridal chime.
The violet whispers of modest worth,
And see as a thought of Heaven
The amaranth bathed to its very heart
With the purple hues of even.

I have blossoms withering now and sere
That told me of love and truth,
They were offered by one who early claimed
The friendship of trusting youth.

The buds are faded, the leaves are brown,
But I prize and treasure them yet,
Though tears will fall as they meet my gaze,
Recalling a fond regret.

For a common weed with its pale, blue cup
Is twined with that very flower,
It knew no nurture from gentle hands,
It grew in no garden bower.

'T was the first faint bloom 'mid the tangled grass
That grew on that friend's low grave,
Ah, little we thought when the first were given
How soon should the last one wave.

And yet a message of Hope was breathed
From each fragile and tender leaf,
That came as a "voice from the Spirit Land"
To solace my heart's wild grief,
It seemed as a type of the second life
As it bloomed where no foot had trod,
For the blue of Heaven was on its leaves,
And it sprung from the lonely sod.

THE BELLE OF THE FANCY BALL.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

It was the height of the season at one of our most fashionable watering places, when a party of fair girls met to arrange the costumes they were to wear at the great fancy ball.

"I shall go as Cleopatra," said Laura Villiers, a superb creature, with queenly carriage, voluptuous form and flashing eyes, exactly the person to act the haughty Egyptian, "I shall go as Cleopatra, remember I select the part first, and now, girls, let me hear what you have determined on."

Each proceeded to tell the costume she had selected, until finally all but one had spoken. This was Clara Townsend, a fair-haired, mild-looking young woman, the orphan niece and dependant on Laura's father. Clara was now at the Springs as the humble companion of her imperious cousin. When all had spoken, one of the company turned to Clara and asked what she was to wear.

"I am not going," said Clara, who had not received a ticket, and was, moreover, without the means to obtain a dress.

"Not going! Has not your uncle, or some one of the beaux invited you?"

Clara was about to reply mildly in the negative when her cousin looked up.

"I am sure, child," said Laura, "father would have procured you a ticket if he had thought you would like to go: don't suppose it was because you were not wished to be present: there," she added, imperiously, as Clara colored, "say no more about it: I will see that you have a ticket and dress: stay, what would suit the child: ah! here is the very character," she said, turning over the leaves of Byron, "Zuleika is just the thing for Clara: amiable and affectionate, you know, ready to endure all things, and romantically love till death."

There was a slight sneer on Laura's lips as she spoke, for, to tell the truth, she had more than once heard the amiability of Clara extolled by those whose good opinion she wished to monopolize, and as Clara was only a poor dependant, while she was an heiress, the haughty and petted Laura did not, even in public, give herself the trouble to regard Clara's feelings. In fact the orphan girl had many things to endure from

her cousin. Oh! bitter is the bread eaten in charity. Often Clara stole away to her chamber in tears; often she prayed to be at rest beside her mother; and often she resolved to leave her uncle's house and earn her livelihood in the meanest capacity. But her uncle would never listen to her leaving him. She could not tell him, that it was her cousin's superciliousness which made her desire to go, and he was not in the way to notice it, so she was compelled to remain.

"I hear George Custis is to be here for the ball," said one of the young ladies. "Is it true, Laura?"

"I believe it is," was the reply. "Father received a letter from him a few days ago, announcing his return to New York, and promising to join us shortly. Father wrote back inviting him to come up to the ball, so I suppose he will be here."

"He is announced rich, is he not?"

"Yes! He was a ward of father's: hence I know all about it; his estate is princely."

"Ah! there will be no chance for any of us," said one of the girls, with a sigh. "I suppose you will monopolize him yourself, Laura."

The proud beauty gave a toss of her head, which spoke volumes; but made no reply in words. Just then her eye happened to fall on Clara, who was listening intently to what was said.

"Oh! but I forgot," said Laura, "none of us can have any chance, for Clara here has appropriated him to herself: when she was a child, just before he sailed five years ago, he took her on his knee, and called her his little wife: since then the romantic creature has, I verily believe, nourished the belief that Mr. Custis will come back and wed her."

The cruel taunt was the more cutting because Mr. Custis had actually done as Laura said, and because Clara had in her secret heart once or twice dreamed of the possibility alluded to; but she had instantly dismissed such day dreams; and, therefore, she felt how unjust was Laura's imputation. Yet she knew that the charge, coming from such a source, would find many believers. Every eye was turned on her immediately. The color rose to her cheeks at this, and when her cousin said, "see, her blushes reveal it," she burst into tears and left the room. Poor Clara!

as she heard Laura's heartless laugh on her closing the door, she wished herself dead, or anywhere if she could find peace.

The night of the ball soon came around. On the afternoon of that day, true to expectation, Mr. Custis arrived; but at so late an hour that he did not see Laura before the *fete* opened. The haughty beauty never looked more superb. The truth is she had exhausted all her own and the milliner's art, besides lavishing money profusely, in order to eclipse every one else; for she had set her heart on the fortune of Mr. Custis, and she well knew the effect of a first appearance. Though she had charged Clara with having designs on him, nothing was further from her real supposition; she had only said what she did in order to annoy her cousin: but she knew that there were others as rich, if not as beautiful as herself, who would leave no scheme untried to secure her father's old ward. She determined to be before hand with them all, nor did she doubt of success.

Both Laura and her cousin were in the ball-room before Mr. Custis. He had been seen by no one but Mr. Villiers, who pronounced his old ward quite improved, and jocularly told the girls to endeavor to secure him.

"Of course," he said, "it would not do for me to show any favoritism; each must take her chance:—and really you both look so beautiful, I think Custis will find it difficult to choose. You, Laura, are perfectly magnificent, and must take his heart by storm at the first glance; but if you fail in that," and he smiled on Clara, "my sweet niece here will prove a rival not to be despised, for she seems lovelier the more one looks at her. But ah! here he comes."

Both ladies looked up, and saw a tall, commanding figure, attired in the costume of a Turkish prince, coming directly toward them, and smiling as if he had already recognized them. His countenance, at all times handsome, looked wonderfully so when lit up by that smile; and each of the females thought they had never seen any one of the other sex so worthy of admiration. Custis, in his heart, returned the compliment, but hesitated to which to give the palm of beauty. He first turned his gaze on Laura, whose dark eyes, magnificent hair, and almost regal form struck him as equal to any he had seen in Spain, that land of glorious beauties. Laura wore the ancient Egyptian dress as seen on monuments, but modified so as to suit her peculiar beauty and not violate modern taste. Her attire sparkled with jewels, and, as she stood awaiting the approach of Custis, she looked every inch the Cleopatra who subdued Marc Anthony.

Clara's beauty, as well as her costume, was in an entirely different style. She wore the oriental dress, consisting of the wide trowsers, the jacket with short sleeves, and the snowy cymar on the bosom. Her waist was confined by a superb cashmere shawl. Around her neck she had a necklace of pearls; and she wore a head-dress of the same pure material. Her tresses flowed in thick, wavy curls over her shoulders, a perfect wealth of gold. As Custis approached, her bosom began to heave, for she remembered Laura's taunt, and involuntarily she clasped her hands on it

to still its tumultuous beatings. Thus standing, the color mantling on her cheeks, she looked almost a divinity.

"Ah! *ma belle* Laura," said Custis, giving her his hand, "I have not forgotten the way you used to tease me; nor have you forgotten that privilege of your sex, I see; for, by assuming the part of Cleopatra, you mean frankly to tell us, I suppose, that our hearts are at your mercy."

"And you," said Laura, briskly, "by assuming your present costume, intend to warn us that you have hearts for all."

He bowed low, and then turned to Clara.

"Pardon me," he said, "but this is surely my little wife—nay! no introduction, Mr. Villiers, you see I know Clara. Really, if you would not think it flattery, Miss Townsend," he continued, "I would say I think you have excelled even the fair promise of childhood."

The conversation now became general, Custis turning from one to the other of the cousins. Laura was gay, witty and animated, maintaining most of the conversation; but she failed to monopolize his attention as she wished: he continually turned to Clara to ask some question, which she answered generally in monosyllables, for the poor girl had not yet got over her confusion. She knew Laura's eye was on her, and that she should be taunted with these attentions as if it was a crime in her to receive them.

"What part do you intend to sustain, to-night?" said Laura, at last, and desiring to draw Custis away, she continued, "if you were attired a little more after the Roman fashion I might allow you to be my Marc Anthony, if on your best behavior."

She intended this is as a sort of a challenge, and expected Custis to take it as such; but he either did not, or would not see it, and answered—

"Fate as well as you are against me. I adopted this oriental costume in the whim of a moment, and now you tell me it prevents my doing my devoir to you as the Roman triumvir. Was ever destiny so hard?" And he bowed to Laura, but she could not tell whether seriously or ironically. "However," he continued, turning with a smile to Clara, "my dress will make a very passable Seyd, and I will do my best to deserve the rest of the character—that is," he added, with marked deference in his tone, "if Miss Townsend will permit me to aspire so high."

He offered his hand to Clara as he spoke, to lead her to the dance, a compliment which she blushing accepted; while Laura turned away and bit her lip, her eyes flashing, and her whole frame quivering with rage.

Once freed from the malign influence of Laura's presence, Clara recovered her natural ease and simplicity of manner, and joined in the conversation with great spirit. She had read much, and thought more, and Custis was completely charmed by her. He had seen so much of fashionable females, that a soul nursed like Clara's in secret, had a strength, an originality, and a freshness about it, that drew him toward it with a strong feeling of sympathy, for he too had lived in the crowd, but not of it. Her conversation was so different from that usually heard in

ball-rooms, had so much solidity in it, and yet was so natural and sprightly, that when at last the mutual interchange of thought paused for a moment, he found to his surprise that he had monopolized Clara for an hour. He noticed many eyes directed on them, and saw at once that his attentions were marked; for Clara's sake, therefore, and lest the whispers of the room should embarrass her, he yielded her to another partner.

For there was now no want of admirers to the portionless girl. The attention of such a man as Custis was sure to introduce any one to notice; and the young men were astonished to find that they had not perceived before the extraordinary loveliness of Mr. Villiers' orphan niece. For the rest of the evening Clara was surrounded with beaux. The excitement of so novel a triumph gave additional lustre to her eye, and a richer bloom to her cheek, and long before the ball was over, she was conceded to be the belle of the evening. But nothing, throughout all the fete, gave her more exquisite pleasure than when she passed Custis in the dance, and received from him one of his smiles. It was like sunlight flooding her heart; every pulse thrilled deliciously. She went to bed that night thinking of Custis, and woke up in tears, for she dreamed she saw him married to Laura.

And what thought Laura? At first she was angry at Custis, and resolved to show it; but reflection brought prudence, and convinced her that in no way could she so easily drive him from her. Her indignation at Clara, however, knew no bounds, nor did she think it necessary to conceal this. Her manner was so haughty and overbearing in consequence, the next morning, that Clara was glad to retreat, from the private parlor they occupied, to her own chamber.

As early almost as such a visit was allowable, Custis made his appearance. Laura chose to take his call to herself, and concealing her mortification, strove to make herself as agreeable as possible. But on Custis all this was lost. He had asked after Clara on his arrival, and Laura had answered carelessly that her cousin was well: finding at last that she did not appear, he rose and took his leave.

He was to dine with the family that day, and when he arrived Clara was already in the room. Bowing slightly to Laura, he passed on regardless of her smile of invitation, and took his seat by Clara, who received him with blushing embarrassment. She had just heard of his visit in the morning, but from the manner in which it had been detailed to her, had imagined that it was intended for Laura; for she had not even been told that he had asked for her. The pang which her jealous cousin had thus inflicted, only increased, however, her present delight.

From that day Custis was always with Clara. In vain were Laura's attempts to draw him away from her cousin: he was true to his first preference; or rather true to that instinct which taught him to love amiability and avoid haughtiness and ill-temper. When Laura found that her scheme was hopeless, she vented her mortification and rage on our heroine. There are a thousand ways in which a person living in the same family with another, may render the latter miserable, without the world seeing anything

of it. Laura perfectly understood this. Never had our heroine been so miserable as now.

Her troubles were increased by the sudden departure of Custis for New York, whither he had been summoned on important business. He was forced to leave at a few hours notice, and did not see Clara before he went: a hasty note with his adieus was all she received from him. She treasured this as a precious relic, for she could not longer conceal from herself that she loved. Laura added to her pangs by insinuating that Custis had only been trifling with her.

"A pretty match it would be—he a millionaire, and you not worth a sixpence," she said to Clara, with a toss of her head. "But if girls will be romantic and foolish, they must expect to suffer for it. I'll warrant that the business is only a plea to get off."

Clara left the room in tears. She could not deny to herself that there seemed some justice in what Laura said. It would have been easy for Custis to have written something more than a mere formal note—why did he not? Yet, when she recalled his manner, she could not believe but that he loved her? Alternating between such painfully conflicting views, she spent the miserable fortnight, which elapsed between the departure of Custis and their own return to New York. On the whole, however, her hopes declined. She had flattered herself at first that he would write to her, but he did not, and this completed her disappointment.

"Vain, foolish Clara," she soliloquized to herself, as she sat alone on the hurricane deck, her head leaning on her hand, and her eyes wondering vacantly over the water. "What madness it was in you to think that one so good, so accomplished and so wealthy, would stoop from his height to marry one so faulty, untaught and dependant as you. It is a bitter, bitter lesson," she mentally continued, while tears gathered in her eyes, "but the dream is past. I will meet my fate with resignation, and live on unloved and alone."

Tears were now flowing profusely from her eyes, and she drew her green veil over her face to conceal them. Just then a hand was laid lightly on her shoulder, and a well known voice, that thrilled to her inmost soul, pronounced the single word—

"Clara!"

In an instant every gloomy thought was forgotten, and she started to her feet, her whole face radiant with joy. Custis stood before her.

"Clara, and alone!" he said. "Why I have been searching all over the boat for you. I was advised by Mr. Villiers that you would return to-day, and so I came up the river to meet you; if you had been looking in the right way you would have seen me come on board at the last landing. I found Laura in the ladies cabin: she told me you were somewhere about; and then resumed her book. But now that I have found you," he continued, with animation, "I feel rewarded for my long search. But tears on your cheek, dear Clara—ah! what can you have to make you sorrowful?—is it that you regret the pleasures you leave behind?"

"Oh! no," said Clara, quickly: then she stopped

confused: she feared Custis would read more in her words than she wished him to know.

But she need not have been alarmed for her delicacy; for Custis, before they reached the city, was her declared lover. Sitting almost alone together on the hurricane deck, with twilight just fading in the West, and the moon rising in the opposite quarter of the firmament, he told his affection, and won from Clara a half whispered reference to her uncle, which he knew how to interpret.

"Of his approval, dear Clara, I have no doubt: I hinted at this in my last letter, and received his hearty consent by return of mail. As he was in the light of a parent to you, I did not think it right to proceed without his sanction, else, dear girl, I should have written to you of my hopes in the note I sent you, or at least addressed you from New York."

The wedding was not long delayed. Clara was

universally pronounced the loveliest bride who had been married from St. Paul's that season. Happiness increased her beauty by lending a gayer sparkle to her eyes, and a brighter bloom to her cheeks. Laura officiated as one of the bridesmaids, but could not restrain her spleen. This was the first occasion on which Custis had ever seen an exhibition of it, and when he and his bride were alone in the carriage, whirling off to his country-seat, where they were to spend the honey-moon, he said—

"I always thought that Laura was ill-tempered: she was so when we were children together. It was my memory of your amiability which first attracted me toward you at the ball; but every hour afterward I liked you better and better, until—you know the rest."

He kissed his lovely wife as he spoke, while Clara, with tears of happiness, hid her face on his bosom.

THE CHEERFUL HEART.

A STORY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE.

"I cannot choose but marvel at the way
In which our lives pass on, from day to day
Learning strange lessons in the human heart,
And yet like shadows letting them depart."—MISS LONDON.

How wearily the little news-boy plodded along the deserted and desolate streets on that Christmas Eve! The cold rain was beating fiercely upon him, and a few tattered garments served but poorly to protect him from its rage. All day long had he been out amid the storm, and was now returning, weary and hungry, to his humble home. The street lamps were lighted, and as he passed by them you could see by the gleam that his face was pale and emaciated—could see that, young as he was, something had been there already to attenuate his features, and give him that wan and desolate look which can be given only by some great affliction, some pinching want or overwhelming grief. You could tell at a glance that a dark shadow was resting upon his pathway—a shadow out of which there seemed, just then, but little hope of his escape. Born amid poverty and wretchedness, and left fatherless while yet in his cradle, his life up to that hour had been nothing but misery—and the whole record of that life was written in his pale face and tattered rags. Yet with all this, as he passed along a close observer might have noticed a strange light in his clear, blue eye—an expression of kindly cheerfulness, such as we may not often see in this world of care and grief—for God's blessing was upon him—the blessing of a cheerful heart.

The sorrow of his life, however deep and abiding, the gloom upon his pathway, however dark and fearful, dimmed not the light that burned so quietly, and yet so steadily within. Like the Vestal fire of old, it grew not dim, but threw its rays far out over the great gloom around him—even now the cold storm beat upon him unheeded. There are waking dreams that come upon us sometimes when we least expect them—bright dreams of love, and home, and Heaven—beautiful visions of a future, all glorious with its burden of song and gladness!—and such a vision, of such a future, now filled and crowded and blessed the heart of that forsaken boy.

He was dreaming as he walked along of better days to come—of a time when the poverty in his pathway should depart, and the beautiful flowers should spring up to bless him with their presence—of a bright home far away from that great city, upon whose cheerful hearth the fire should not go out, and where hunger should never haunt him more. And then into that dream of a better life—into that vision of a cheerful home far-off among the green hills—came a pleasant face—the face of his beloved mother. He could see her as she sat by the lattice at the quiet evening hour reading the sacred Bible, with the last red rays

resting like a glory upon her brow, while the rose leaf trembled at the window, and the little violets folded themselves to sleep. Very pleasant was the picture there passing before the gaze of that ragged child—very glorious the panorama of green hills and bright flowers and singing birds—very beautiful that humble cottage, half covered by the clustering foliage:—and his heart thrilled and heaved with a strange rapture never known before—such rapture, such joy as the stricken poor can *never* know, save when some good angel comes down from the blue Heaven and beckons them away from the haunts of woe and want in which they suffer, to the free air and the blessed sunlight.

But the dream had passed—the sun had set—the flowers faded—the cottage disappeared. Of all that beautiful vision, so cheering and so glorious, no trace remained; no vestige of leaf or tree or bird; no letter of his mother's Bible—no love-light of his mother's eye. The darkness came around him, and he found himself there amid the storm in the silent streets of that great and sinful city. So gathering his garments more closely about him, he hurried along to his home with a prayer upon his lip and God's sunlight in his heart. Turning into an obscure street, a few steps brought him to the door of a wretched dwelling, which he entered. Follow now and behold a scene of want and penury, such as may be found sometimes in this world of ours—a scene upon which men look with unconcern, but on which, thank God! the angels gaze with joy: a home where poverty struggles with a brave heart and is conquered.

Before the fire sat a pale, sad woman, upon whose features the traces of great loveliness were still visible, though sorrow had sharpened them somewhat, and ghastly want done much to dim their beauty. Upon her high and queenly brow the blue veins were clearly visible, as the blood coursed through them with unwonted rapidity. Her large, dark eyes were dim with tears. Some new sorrow had started afresh the sealed fountain of her grief—and now as she gazed silently upon the red embers in all the utter agony of despair, it might seem that hope had gone forever and God forsaken her.

"Mother! dear mother!" said the boy, as he entered all dripping with the rain, "I have come at last, and I am tired and hungry."

"My son! my son!" replied the mother, "there is no morsel of food in the house," and her lip quivered. "We must starve!—we must starve! God help us!" and her tears broke forth afresh.

Thus had it been for many a weary month. With

scarcely food sufficient to support life that mother and her boy had struggled, and suffered, and wept, and prayed—and now that the cold winter was coming on, no wonder that her heart shuddered and her cheek grew pale at the hopeless prospect ahead. How could they pass the dreary days and the long nights, the storm and the terrible cold, without food, and raiment, and shelter? And then where could they go when the heartless landlord should thrust them from their present wretched dwelling, as he had threatened to do on the morrow? Verily the gloom and the despair were great and fearful!

And yet even at that desolate hour an eye looked down from Heaven upon that friendless widow. There by the hearthstone—by the dying embers an angel hovered—an earthly angel, even in the guise of that cheerful child. For

“Earth had its angels, though their forms are moulded
But of such clay as fashions all below:
Though harps are wanting and bright pinions folded,
We know them by the love-light on their brow.”

“Mother!” said he, “we will *not* starve. God has not forsaken us. There are better days to come—better days to come, mother! I saw it in my dream. Oh! I had so bright a dream, and in it I beheld your own dear self, and you were singing a pleasant song away in that blessed home. Oh! mother, cheer up! cheer up.”

When the little boy lay down upon his wretched couch that dreary night he was changed. His mother's tears—his mother's great despair had transformed him from a suffering child into a strong-hearted man—from a weak and helpless dependant into an earnest, thoughtful worker. Henceforth his path was one of duty alone—and no allurements, be it ever so bright, could turn him from it. Before him glittered forever a guiding star: and his intense, absorbing gaze, neither the cares nor the pleasures, nor the vanities of life could for an instant divert. Existence had for him but one object, and his utmost energies were taxed for its attainment.

Never did the sun rise in greater splendor than on

the Christmas morning following that night of hunger, gilding the spires and domes of the city with his rays. The streets were already rapidly filling with the gay crowd seeking pleasure, and men walked as though new life had been given them by the general hilarity and the bracing air.

In the most crowded street was the news-boy, but not the disconsolate, wretched lad who had plodded his way through the storm the night before to a desolate home and a supperless bed. You would not have recognized him as he hurried along, eagerly intent upon his avocation, and his face all radiant with the great hope that struggled at his heart.

That night joy visited the forsaken fireside. They had paid the landlord his rent, and still had sufficient left wherewith to purchase food. It was a merry Christmas for them.

Years came and went. Great changes had taken place. The boy had grown to manhood. High honors were conferred upon him. Wealth flowed into his coffers—his praise was upon every tongue. And at this very hour, upon the banks of the majestic Hudson, his mansion stands conspicuous among a thousand others for its taste and elegance.

He has but one companion—his aged mother—the lonely widow whom we saw some years since, gazing mournfully into the fire, and watching its flickering light. His influence is felt far and wide, and the poor and the wretched of every class and kind come around him with their blessings.

Thank God! Thank God!—for every suffering son of man, who thus comes up from the deep shadow of despair into the blessed sunlight, and, turning, gives his word of cheer to the groping millions beneath him.

Thank God! Thank God, that scattered here and there throughout the world in many an humble home may be found men and women, unto whom life presents but little of love, or hope, or joy, and yet who pass along amid its desolate paths without a murmur, sustained, and soothed, and blessed by this alone—A
CHEERFUL HEART.

A. J. W.

THE DRESS-MAKER'S APPRENTICE;

OR, THE BACHELOR ABROAD AND AT HOME.

BY CAROLINE ORNE.

CHAPTER I.

"CAN you tell me the name of that beautiful girl who has just been dancing with Frank Ashton?" said Robert Lanson, to a gentleman by the name of Sutherland, who stood next him at one of the most brilliant parties there had been for the season.

"Her name is Edith Eldon," replied Sutherland, "and she is an heiress as well as a beauty."

"She is really the prettiest girl I ever saw," said Lanson, "and I must obtain an introduction to her," and as he finished speaking, he left Sutherland in order to execute his intention.

Sutherland followed him with his eyes, and unconsciously murmured a few words to himself, while a scornful smile wreathed his lips. To one not thoroughly acquainted with Lanson, the reason of this would have been difficult to determine; for few gentlemen were more liberally endowed with personal attractions than Lanson. Besides, though not over six and twenty, he had, by his talents and industry, secured an extensive and lucrative practice as a lawyer. He had, moreover, recently come into possession of a very handsome estate.

Lanson obtained the introduction he sought, and set himself seriously to work to win the fascinating heiress. She did not seem insensible to his assiduous attention, for her color would sometimes deepen when he suddenly entered her presence; and her eyes often veiled themselves beneath their long, thick lashes when he addressed her.

One lovely evening there was a large party at Mrs. Sumner's. The air of the crowded rooms had become warm and oppressive, and Edith stepped into a balcony, so filled with tall, flowering plants as to entirely screen her from view. She wished to commune with her own heart, for she was not unconscious that she was becoming deeply interested in Lanson. She soon became aware that there were persons conversing together near the door of the balcony, though she was too much engrossed with her own thoughts to mind what was said, till at length the name of Lanson fell on her ear. This had the effect at once to arrest her attention.

"Can that be true?" were the next words which Edith heard.

"I have but too good reason to believe that it is," replied a voice which she knew to be Sutherland's.

"Lanson is the last person," said his companion, "whom I should have thought guilty of so much meanness. I always imagined that he was one of the most generous and noble-hearted fellows in existence."

"One whose heart-worship has, like his, always

been lavished upon mammon and his own dear self, can neither be generous nor noble-hearted. If he assume the semblance of either, it must be from interested motives. His sister, who from being the eldest of a large family, while he is the youngest, is quite old enough to be his mother, keeps his house, and performs as much labor as two servants ought to, and, what is worse, is treated by him as a mere underling."

"Why does she submit to be treated thus?"

"He gives her a home, which I suppose she thinks is better than to be cast upon the world at her time of life, for she is entirely destitute of property. Besides, I have heard it suggested that she really imagines herself inferior to him, and, therefore, submits to his caprices and exactions with the greatest possible meekness, and does not even seem to know that she has any cause of complaint."

"And can Miss Eldon know anything of this?"

"I suspect not," replied Sutherland.

"Would it not be right to give her a hint of it?"

"All things considered, I should say no. Interference in such cases usually produces an effect opposite to what was intended. It will undoubtedly be the more judicious way to let things take their own course."

It was impossible for Edith not to overhear this conversation, and the unnamable light in which it placed Lanson, gave her more pain than fifteen minutes before she could have willingly imagined. As she knew on what slight grounds reports disadvantageous to a person's character are frequently based, she at once came to a determination to satisfy herself as to the validity of the charges against Lanson, to which she had just been an involuntary listener. As soon as Sutherland and his companion had withdrawn from its vicinity, she took the first opportunity to leave the balcony. She soon afterward met Lanson, who was evidently seeking her. His manner toward her, from the first, had been marked with the greatest delicacy, a trait which cannot fail to be flattering to a lady's self-complacency, implying as it does the existence of qualities which are the greatest ornaments to the female character. He ventured, once or twice, a step further this evening than he had ever done before, by addressing her in terms somewhat complimentary, yet always in a manner so as not to exceed the limits of good taste. If she had not overheard the conversation between Sutherland and his companion, he might have made the impression he intended: as it was, she was so much pre-occupied by a plan already floating in her mind in a chrysalis state, that, although his

words fell on her ear, she imperfectly comprehended their meaning. Lanson was disappointed, for he had carefully marked the different phases which her feelings had appeared to assume with regard to himself since his first introduction to her, and he imagined that she was fully prepared to listen with some degree of interest, to what, to do him justice, were no idle compliments, but the real sentiments of his heart. Want of perseverance, however, as has been suggested, was not one of his faults, and suspecting that she affected an indifference which she did not feel, he did not suffer his courage to be in the least damped.

CHAPTER II.

"If you have not already come to a satisfactory conclusion respecting Lanson," said Mary Arnot, Edith's cousin, "I advise you to make all possible haste, as I am certain that he has made up his mind to pop the question."

Edith sat silent a short time, and appeared uncommonly thoughtful. She at length said—

"I wish you to tell me truly, Mary, if you have ever heard anything to Lanson's disadvantage?"

"Never. On the contrary, all whom I have heard speak of him, represent him as being a young man of correct habits, and as uncommonly attentive to his business, although the property which has lately fallen to him yields so large an income that he might, if he chose, give up business altogether."

"A circumstance which may go to corroborate what I have heard," said Edith, and she then mentioned the remarks which she had heard Sutherland make respecting him.

"Mr. Sutherland has certainly been misinformed," said Mary, "and I should not suffer his remarks to influence me in the least."

"That is impossible," replied Edith. "Unless I can be perfectly sure that they were without foundation, Robert Lanson can never be anything more to me than he is now."

"The difficulty lies in making yourself sure," said Mary. "Mr. Hearsay, who is not the most veracious personage in the world, being the only one from whom you can gather any information."

"I have been thinking of a plan," said Edith. "It flashed upon my mind while listening to Sutherland's remarks."

"It is a romantic one, I hope," said Mary, "and if so, you must let me be an aider and abetter, because you know that a little romance, once in a while, is the delight of my heart."

"Without doubt, I shall be glad of your assistance," said Edith.

"What is it then? I am so impatient to hear," replied Mary.

"You know that I told you one day, not long since, that I had thoughts of learning a dress-maker's trade."

"Yes, but I did not suppose you were in earnest."

"I was, however, for although there is certainly no prospect at present that I shall be obliged to earn my living, as strange things as that have come to pass. Besides there is a monotony in fashionable life which tires me. I wish to see the world under some different

aspect. Now, wherever I go, I am greeted with smiles because I am Miss Eldon, the wealthy heiress. Miss Eldon, the dress-maker's apprentice, may have opportunity to see people as they really are."

"That may be true, but how by learning a dress-maker's trade you can accomplish the other object you have in view, I am at a loss to imagine."

"Miss Hilton, you know, is one of the most fashionable dress-maker's in the city, and her shop is within five minutes walk of Lanson's residence. Now that pretty, modest girl, by the name of Susan Rowe, who fitted a morning dress for me last week, told me that while she was learning her trade of Miss Hilton, she had a room in Lanson's house, and that her meals, prepared in the nicest manner, were always sent up to her by Miss Lanson, as her brother did not wish to have a third person at the table. Now if I can have the good fortune to be Susan Rowe's successor, it will be all that is necessary to accomplish my object."

"You will, of course, be obliged to make a confidant of Miss Hilton, for without doubt she knows you by sight."

"I believe not, yet even if she does there will be no necessity of taking her into my confidence, as I mean to cover this light colored hair of mine with tresses made into a fashionable wig, dark as the story-tellers say, as the raven's plume."

"But even if you wear a black wig, it will not change your appearance in other respects. Your name too, she has doubtless heard of the celebrated Miss Eldon, if she never saw her."

"Perhaps not, and even if she has, she has plenty to attend to without trying to find out if we are related to each other. She might be anxious to discover the origin of a new fashion, but she won't trouble herself to trace that of an apprentice girl."

"You may be recognized by other people if not by her."

"Not at all. When they see me pass they will say, 'how much Miss Hilton's little apprentice girl looks like Miss Eldon—if I didn't know that it was impossible, I should think it was her'—and then they will think no more about me."

"And you feel as if you would be doing perfectly right to constitute yourself a spy upon poor Lanson in his own *menage*, where it cannot be expected that he will speak and act by rule."

"Certainly I do. Stratagem in love as in war, should never be held dishonorable."

CHAPTER III.

THE house of Lanson, a large and somewhat stately looking dwelling, was in a retired and pleasant street. Besides himself and sister, who, as has been mentioned, was his housekeeper, there was only one inhabitant, a girl of fourteen, who scoured knives, washed dishes, cleaned boots and shoes, did errands and whatever else she was capable of doing. Miss Lanson's life was, therefore, a very lonely one, and she used sometimes to think after Susan Rowe went away, that she would give a good deal to have some person to speak to occasionally. She felt this want

the more as her brother, who had, as he said, talking enough to do in the regular transaction of his business, was, when at home, uncommonly taciturn, seldom speaking except to give some directions relative to the manner he wished his dinner cooked, or some other matter which bore directly on his personal comfort. One morning when a sense of loneliness pressed more heavily than usual on Miss Lanson's mind, her attention was arrested by the ringing of the street door bell. It was seldom rung by any one but her brother, and as she was wondering why he had returned so soon after breakfast, Hannah, the girl before alluded to, put her head into the room and said that there was a lady at the door who wished to speak with her.

"Wait on her into the parlor," said Miss Lanson, "and I will be there in a few minutes."

When Miss Lanson entered the parlor, she found a young girl whose dress was plain and simple, yet exactly fitted to her form, which was remarkably fine. Without any preamble she made known the motive of her call.

"I am going," said she, "to learn a dress-maker's trade of Miss Hilton, and having heard that you lodged and boarded one of her girls last summer, I have called to see if you would accommodate me in the same way."

"For my own part I should be very glad to," replied Miss Lanson, "for, as the house is large, it would make it seem less lonely; but what my brother will think about it I cannot tell."

"If he should be willing," said the young girl, "I shall consider it as a favor, as I know of no house where I can obtain accommodations such as I should like, which is not too distant from the shop. If convenient I should prefer to have my meals in my own room."

"It will be perfectly convenient," said Miss Lanson. "Even if it did put me to a little extra trouble I should not value it, for the sake of having one more human being live and breathe under the same roof."

"If it should cause you any additional trouble," said the girl, "I shall be willing to satisfy you for it."

"I will speak to my brother about it," said Miss Lanson, "when he comes home to dinner."

"And I will call again in the morning to ascertain the result. My name is Eldon, and if you wish to make any inquiries respecting me, I can refer you to several respectable persons who reside in a neighboring town."

When Lanson came home to dinner, his sister's first care was to study his countenance, that she might "fashion her demeanor by his looks." She imagined that he appeared in better humor than usual, and she felt sure that he was, when he voluntarily informed her that he had recently several times met with a lady with whom he was so much pleased, that he had serious thoughts of marrying her.

"She is of course very handsome and very accomplished, or you would not think of such a thing."

"She is in every respect superior to any lady I have ever met with. The last time I saw her I thought she seemed more distant and reserved than

usual; but I suspect her object was to increase my ardor, by making me doubtful as to my success."

"As it will probably be several months before you are married," said his sister, hesitating, after awhile, "I thought I should like, that is if you are perfectly willing, for I am sure I shouldn't think of such a thing if you are not, to have a young lady who called here this morning board here a short time."

"Another dress-maker's apprentice, I suppose."

"Yes, but she says she shall be willing to pay for any extra trouble she may give."

"I cannot say that I feel much flattered at the idea of having a person of her class as a boarder, yet if she is willing to give five dollars a week, as we have several rooms which are entirely useless to us, I will not object to her coming, provided she on all occasions takes her meals in her room."

"That is a condition she seemed particularly anxious about, though she has a face, if she is nothing but a dress-maker's apprentice, which for my part I should like to see at the table."

"What kind of a face has she?"

"I don't know that I can give you a correct idea of it, for I am not good at description—but I know that she has a very handsome nose, beautiful red lips, and the brightest blue eyes I ever saw. They made me think of the deep, clear spring I used to love when I was a child. I often amused myself by looking into it, but I could never see to the bottom of the sunshine that was poured into it from overhead—that was always unfathomable."

"What colored hair has she?" said Lanson, the description which his sister gave of her making him think of Edith.

"Black, and it struck me that her skin was a little darkish for a person with blue eyes."

"Dark skinned ladies are not to my taste," said Lanson, as he left the room.

CHAPTER IV.

EDITH did not fail to call on Miss Lanson the following morning according to promise. She immediately closed with Miss Lanson's offer to board her for five dollars a week, somewhat to that lady's surprise, who had felt afraid that a person in her station would think it more than she could afford.

"Won't you look at the rooms, and select the one you think will suit you best?" said Miss Lanson, wondering as she spoke why she should appear so indifferent about it.

"It will be as well," replied Edith, and she followed Miss Lanson up stairs, who showed her three rooms, all of which were large and airy, though very scantily furnished.

Edith selected the only one which had a carpet on the floor; and Miss Lanson said she would do her best to supply the other deficiencies with articles of furniture belonging to the other chambers.

"I forgot to mention," said Edith, "that I shall always spend Sunday with a friend who lives in a distant part of the city. I shall always go in season to take tea with her Saturday, and shall not return here till dinner-time on Monday."

"Then there ought to be some reduction in the price," said Miss Lanson.

"By no means. I am perfectly willingly to give five dollars a week, even if I am absent one, or even two days each week, which may frequently happen to be the case."

Edith now rose to go, saying that she should be back in season for dinner.

"Don't be too early," said Miss Lanson, "for I cannot send your dinner up to you till after my brother has dined, as he is particular to have the first choice of whatever may be put upon the table. There is always enough left, however, which is very good, and I shall be careful to select the best for you."

"I am not difficult," said Edith, "and I beg that you will give yourself no unnecessary trouble on my account."

"I shall not consider it any trouble," said Miss Lanson, "but rather a pleasure to see that your meals are of good quality and properly served."

Edith now bid her good morning, and after giving directions to a porter to go for her baggage and convey it to her new lodging, she proceeded to the shop where she was to take her first lesson in the art of dress-making.

Everything went on quite smoothly for more than a week. Edith had been absent one night, for the purpose of attending a party, where she as usual met Lanson. Miss Lanson, when she found that she was preparing to go, very much regretted her intended absence, and tried to persuade her to remain at home, as she said her brother was going to one of the grand parties he was in the habit of attending, where he expected to see a lady he was so much pleased with that she shouldn't wonder if he married her, she should, therefore, be quite alone till a late hour. Edith excused herself by saying that she had promised her friend to spend the night with her.

"I wish you could see our boarder," said Miss Lanson, one morning to her brother. "If you should, you would say that you never saw a person that was really beautiful before; and if there was ever a lady in the world she is one. And then she is so gay and so lively, and sometimes so funny that——"

"That," said her brother, taking up the word, "you are so amused that you neglect many things which you ought to attend to. Now I should much rather see my boots and shoes properly blacked than forty pretty milliners, and it appears to me that if you should attend to it as you ought, that Hannah could be made to do them so that they would look a little more decent."

"I am sure I am sorry that I didn't mind that she did them so badly—I will do them myself for the future," meekly replied his sister.

"I should be very glad if you would," said he, "and I wish you would also be a little more particular about ironing my shirt bosoms and collars—I don't think you take much pains with them."

"I will do my best," said she, "and I always have done. Miss Eldon saw me ironing some yesterday, and said she never saw any look nicer."

"Then Miss Eldon's ideas of niceness differ from mine," he replied. "It would not be amiss either if

you should trust more to yourself and less to Hannah in preparing dinner. I have not been remarkably well pleased of late, but have foreborne to say any thing, thinking that perhaps matters might be mended. The dress-maker's lively and funny apprentice I suppose though must be attended to whether I am or not."

"Indeed, Robert," said Miss Lanson, "I never trust Hannah to prepare dinner or any other meal. It was not my fault that those chickens were not good yesterday. I knew the moment I saw them that they would not be good roasted, and had not your orders respecting the manner you wished to have them cooked been peremptory, I should have done them some other way."

"Well, all I have to say is, that if you have any judgment, I wish you would have the goodness to exercise it for the future. I shall send some green peas home for dinner to-day—only a very few, as they as yet sell at a very high price, so you needn't think of sending any up to your boarder. The remainder of those strawberries I purchased yesterday will do for the dessert."

"There is not a single strawberry left."

"Not a single one left?"

"No," replied his sister, looking a good deal frightened.

"You gave them to your boarder, I suppose; but remember if she wishes for any fruit she will for the future supply herself."

"I thought as she is absent a good deal, we could afford to let her have a little of what is left."

"You for *once* happened to think wrong then, and I will thank you to remember that I strictly prohibit you from offering her any more. Another thing I have minded too, and that is, the piece of ice on the butter is much larger than there is any need of. All that is left is of course wasted."

"It is almost always about all melted by the time Miss Eldon finishes her dinner."

"Eldon did you say? I thought your boarder's name was Alden."

"No, her name is Eldon."

"Rather a singular coincidence," said he. "I did not think that there was another person in town by that name. Where is Hannah? Let her go and get my other hat—this is too heavy for this warm morning."

"Hannah is gone of an errand," she replied, "I will go for your hat myself."

"Why didn't you bring the gloves you saw lying on the table when you were about it?" said he, when she returned.

"I didn't know that you wished for them," she replied. "I will go back and get them."

"I wish you would," said he, and his sister, unconscious of fatigue from the stimulus afforded by fear joined with a desire to please, again ascended the stairs in order to procure his gloves.

Lanson took them and left the house.

Edith, the evening previous, had taken a piece of work home with her to finish, so that instead of going to the shop as usual, directly after breakfast, she had remained in her room. What little air there was, was not in a direction to come in at the windows, and as

the morning was oppressively warm, she had in order to make herself comfortable, been obliged to leave open her chamber door. It might have been proper for her to have closed it when Lanson commenced finding fault with his sister: she did not, however, and consequently heard all that was said. Soon after his departure, having finished her sewing, she prepared to go to the shop.

"Miss Eldon, do step this way one minute," said Miss Lanson, who heard her passing through the hall.

Edith entered a small, back apartment, where her hostess with a sad, care-worn countenance stood by a table, on which were lying a number of very fine linen shirts.

"Do, Miss Eldon," said she, "if you possibly can, tell me what I can do to make these look better. My brother feels dissatisfied with them, and says they are not starched and ironed as they ought to be."

"I cannot tell you what to do," said Miss Eldon, "for they are already as nice as it is in the power of human hands to make them. Had I a brother so hard to please as yours is, I should give up the attempt in despair."

"Robert seems more difficult about his things than he used to," said Miss Lanson. "The truth is, he is anxious to appear uncommonly well, on account of the lady I mentioned to you a few days ago that he has in his eye."

"Could the truth be known," said Edith, "I dare say that the lady in question would value a smooth temper much more highly than a smooth dickey. Ah, here are a pair of boots—the ones, I suppose, that you are to have the privilege of blacking for him. You have so many things to attend to, and look so worried and fatigued, let me see if I cannot succeed."

"Oh! not for the world."

"And why not? I am always pretty sure to succeed in whatever I undertake, and I have no doubt but that I can black Mr. Lanson's boots in a manner which will prove entirely satisfactory to him. Just lend me this apron, and I will polish them so well that no person will suspect they were not done by a regular shoe-black."

Headless of Miss Lanson's remonstrances, she commenced blacking the boots, and did not leave them till she could see her face in them.

"There," said she, placing them in a conspicuous place, and assuming an air of mock triumph, "I knew that I could do them as well as if I had done nothing but black shoes all my life time. I think that even the lady you mentioned, who it seems is the innocent cause of his fastidiousness in shirt-bosoms and boots, should she chance to see them will give him credit for employing as pains-taking a shoe-black as there is in the city."

"What would my brother think if he should know that you did them?"

"He would probably think that a dress-maker's apprentice ought not to feel degraded by performing such a little menial office for the handsome, accomplished and *amiable* Mr. Lanson, especially when it would otherwise have devolved on his sister."

"He don't in a general way expect me to do them,"

said Miss Lanson. "Hannah can almost always suit him, but he sometimes has a good deal to perplex him relative to his business, and is always obliged to treat his clients with courtesy, let them be tedious and troublesome as they will, or he will lose their custom, so it is not to be wondered at if he is a little out of humor when he comes home."

"By no means," replied Edith. "I have heard of many persons whose ill-humor by dint of careful nursing, often rises to so high a pitch that there might be a dangerous explosion were they not able to let it off at home occasionally. Mr. Lanson seems obliged on account of a paucity of servants to select his sister as a safety valve, who will doubtless be succeeded by his wife whenever he obtains one."

"Oh! no," said Miss Lanson, "for he has always been so used to finding fault with me that it will seem a great deal more natural to him than to find fault with his wife. I have no doubt but that he will be very indulgent to his wife, especially if he is so fortunate as to obtain the lady he is so much pleased with."

"How happens it?" said Edith, as she poured a little cologne water upon her hands, after having subjected them to a more thorough ablution than usual, even though they had been encased in a pair of thick gloves while performing what was to them a very novel employment—"how happens it that you have never seen the lady you speak of? Don't you ever attend any parties?"

"No, indeed, Robert says my manners are too much out of date for me to mix in fashionable society. I received a few invitations when I first presided over his establishment, but there is a general understanding now that I never go out, so people have ceased to invite me."

"I shall be absent again to-night," said Edith, as she put on her bonnet.

"How strange that you should always be absent the same evenings that my brother is. He is going to a party this evening, I can tell by his appearance."

And Miss Lanson was right. Her brother did attend a party, and so did Edith. Lanson thought he had never seen her look and appear so well, but she received his attentions with a coldness which he could not possibly misconstrue, for that which is sometimes assumed as a mask to cover the real feelings of the heart. He could have borne this with a better grace had she treated all with similar indifference. It was impossible, however, for him not to perceive that Frank Ashton, the gentleman who had paid her particular attention the first evening he ever saw her, and who had since modestly kept somewhat in the back-ground, had more than regained his original place in her favor. To be supplanted by Frank Ashton was in his estimation too humiliating, for though he was well educated and possessed talents of the highest order, he was poor. Neither could he, thought Lanson, compare with himself in personal advantages. In this he was right as respected those which generally pass for such in the eyes of the multitude; but persons who prefer an intellectual expression of countenance to a brilliant complexion, and some other advantages of a showy nature, would have been better pleased with the looks of Ashton.

That which added to Lanson's chagrin was, he had within a few days purchased a high priced piano, which was that very moment standing in silent dignity in one of the parlors, with Miss Eldon's favorite songs and airs reposing on the top of it. He began now seriously to apprehend that the roll of bank-bills he paid the manufacturer of the instrument, would have been more judiciously employed in purchasing stock.

CHAPTER V.

"It is a delightful morning," said Edith to Miss Lanson, "and if I were you I would walk out, if it were for nothing but the novelty of breathing a little air, which has not first been enclosed within four walls."

"I would," replied Miss Lanson, "if Hannah had not gone to make her sister a visit to-day."

"If that is the only thing that prevents you," said Edith, "I will take Hannah's place—I can easily apologize to Miss Hilton for being absent from the shop."

After some hesitation, Miss Lanson concluded to go.

"You will be in no danger of being disturbed," said she, when she was ready for her walk, "for except the boy my brother sometimes sends with the meat and vegetables for dinner, no person enters the house half a dozen times a year that does not belong to the family."

"I shall enjoy myself very well, I dare say," said Edith, "so don't be in a hurry to return."

"I should like to call on Miss Hinckley," said Miss Lanson, "if she did not live so far from here. She is all the friend I have in the city. We used to be school-girls together, and we have grown old and out of date together; but then, you know, it isn't natural for us to seem out of date to each other."

"Why don't she call on you?" inquired Edith.

"Her health is delicate, so that she is not able to walk the mile which separates us, and she can seldom afford to pay for a seat in an omnibus."

"Make her a good, long visit now," said Edith, "and talk over everything that has happened since you last met."

"I *can* spend an hour with her," said Miss Lanson, looking at the time-piece, "and then be back in season to prepare dinner," and as she spoke, her countenance brightened up with quite a holiday look.

"I cannot imagine what makes Miss Lanson think you are so handsome in this horrid black wig," said Edith, looking into the glass and addressing the light, sylph-like figure which it reflected. As she spoke, she playfully entwined her fingers with the curling locks and cast it upon the floor. "Worse still," she continued—"such sunny hair and such a dingy skin," and running into the kitchen and pouring some water into a basin, her nut-brown complexion soon took the hue of a snow-wreath bathed in the beams of a rosy twilight.

She returned to the parlor and amused herself by looking at the music lying on the piano.

"Oh! here is the song I love above all others," said

she, "I have half a mind to sing it—besides I do so want to know if Lanson was cheated in this piano."

The next minute she was seated before it with her fingers lightly running over its keys.

"It is certainly a very tolerable instrument," thought she, as she finished the song and turned to another.

She then went on playing and singing till she began to think that it was nearly time for Miss Lanson to return. She gave a glance at the time-piece and concluded that she might venture on one song more. She was in the midst of the second stanzas when Lanson, who had returned home to procure some papers which he needed, ascended the front door-steps and was about to pull the bell, when the sound of music caused him to hesitate. He imagined that his sister had invited some person who had called on her to play upon the piano, a liberty which he felt disposed to highly resent, and one he was quite sure she would not presume to repeat. He suspected there would be a slipping out at side-doors the moment he rung the bell, but finding that he fortunately had his latch-key in his pocket, he admitted himself without noise and stole softly into the room containing the piano. He had proceeded only a few steps when he stumbled over something which he took to be the cat, but which on looking down proved to be a lady's wig. The noise thus produced, though slight, as it happened during a momentary pause in the music, reached the ear of Edith. She turned her head, and when she saw who it was quickly rose from her seat.

"Do I see Miss Eldon?" said Lanson.

"Yes, my name is Eldon, and I board with Miss Lanson."

"I am unable to comprehend what the meaning of this can be," said he.

"One very plain meaning is," she replied, "I wished to learn the dress-maker's trade of Miss Hilton, and there was no other place where I could board that was within a convenient distance."

"Can I then have been deceived? I thought, and others thought with me that you were the heiress of half a million."

"You have not been deceived in that respect," said Edith, "but as every person is liable to a reverse of fortune, I some time since came to a determination to prepare myself to meet any reverse that might happen to me."

"This is one meaning, you say—may I presume to inquire the others?"

"Certainly. You must know without my confessing it that I was not—to say the least—displeased with your appearance. I, however, by a circumstance which is not worth repeating, was led to suspect that there was a false and a real side to your character—a rough and smooth side to your temper. Now as the noble, or rather apparently noble side of your character, and the smooth side of your temper were always presented when you were abroad, I naturally concluded that the mean side of the one, and the rough side of the other were kept for home use. I wished to prove the truth of my suspicions, and I have."

"Espionage is *not* mean, I suppose."

"I have been guilty of none," she replied. "The knowledge I have obtained will be converted to my

own benefit—I shall not report it for the benefit of others. Good morning, sir,” and curtseying, she retired to her own room.

“Poor Lanson!” she thought, as she turned the key of her door, “you have been tested by a rather severe ordeal—there are few I suspect who would pass it without a slight singe, yet while I pity you I have much reason to congratulate myself, for so infatuated had I become that nothing short of hearing and seeing could satisfy me that you were not as estimable as you appeared. The fury of the storm will, I am afraid, burst upon his sister, but I will find a way, and that soon, to indemnify her for all that she has so meekly suffered.”

And she did indemnify her. In less than a week afterward Miss Lanson received a letter, informing her that ten thousand dollars, not transferable during her life-time, had been placed at her disposal. Lanson’s reasons were too good for not wishing to identify Miss Eldon the heiress as Miss Eldon the dress-maker’s apprentice, to permit him to gratify his revenge by disclosing what he did not fail, when no person was within ear-shot, to call mean, unlady-like and bold.

In three months afterward he was married to a rich widow, ten years older than himself, who did not hesitate to tell him that it would be more agreeable to her for his sister to find a home elsewhere. Fortunately Miss Lanson thought that she should prefer to go, and within a few days after her brother’s marriage she was comfortably settled with her old friend, Miss Hinckley, the handsome sum given her by Edith being ample for the maintenance of them both, in as much comfort as they desired at the small and neat establishment owned by Miss Hinckley.

Among the ladies who attracted the most attention at one of the fashionable watering-places, the next season, were Mrs. Ashton and Mrs. Gilmore, formerly Edith Eldon, and Mary Arnott. Miss Lanson and Miss Hinckley were present at Edith’s bridal party, and the young bride’s eyes never rested on the happy and tranquil countenance of the former without a thrill of pleasure visiting her heart. Removed from the chilling and depressing atmosphere which surrounded her when her home was with her brother, Miss Lanson did not feel herself to be out of date, nor was she considered so by others.

ADVERTISING FOR A WIFE.

BY HARRY SUNDERLAND.

"MARRIED! Are you really in earnest, Jones?"

"Oh, yes. I've got a wife; and a good one too.

Though I must own that she's not what would be called a beauty. But pretty is that pretty does. I thought her 'exceedingly plain at first, but that impression has worn off, and to my eyes her person is now quite agreeable."

"But Jones, how were you ever able to muster up courage enough to ask a woman to have you?"

"That was the great point of difficulty," replied Jones. "I would have taken a wife ten or fifteen years earlier than I did, if it hadn't been for that confounded 'popping the question.' But I never could do that. More than a dozen times have I been on the point of offering my heart to some charming fair one, who already had it in full possession, notwithstanding she, strangely enough, would not discover the fact; but it was no use; I couldn't do it. My knees would begin to tremble, my breast to heave, my heart to rise upward, and my tongue to cleave to the roof of my mouth. More than once in my life, I got to the point of essaying to speak; but I had no utterance. The vocal organs were suffering under a temporary nervous paralysis.

"Once I was more desperately in love than usual; and I believe the sweet, young creature who was the object of this passion felt for me a reciprocating tenderness. I visited her for upward of a year, and if I could have said the word, I believe she would have fallen into my arms at almost any time during that period; but I had not the courage. She was a beautiful being—a very poet's dream of loveliness. But I lost her because my faint heart would not let me win her. It was leap year, when I visited this sweet maiden, and I lived in the daily hope that she would assert her privilege, and speak the words of love herself. I even alluded to the Bissextile fact, but my meaning was not understood. While I yet lingered, resolving every day that on the morrow I would know my fate, a bolder man, and less worthy I would fain believe, stepped in and carried off the prize.

"It took me a year or two to get over this. My heart had been deeply touched. But, I was a marrying man. A wife I had always intended to have, and a wife I was fully resolved that I would have. So, as a last resort, I advertised."

"What?"

"I advertised for a wife."

"Oh, dear!"

"It's true. And what is more I was successful. Let me tell you the story."

"Do. I have seen a good many matrimonial advertisements, but set them all down as pieces of pleasantry. And you really got your wife by advertising."

"I did, without doubt. I had become desperate on the subject, when the thought of advertising popped into my head. After turning it over for a while, I said to myself, 'that will do,' and, forthwith set to work upon the form of announcement. This I found almost as hard a task as the one I was seeking to escape. 'I'd rather write a book,' said I, throwing down my pen, after the tenth trial. But, I went at it again, and finally hammered out something that I thought would answer the purpose. To prevent being caught by a tartar, an ugly old maid, or a too loving widow, I included a proviso in the advertisement to the effect, that either party, at the interview, might decline a matrimonial contract, without assigning any reason therefor.

"In due time the advertisement appeared. I read it over in print a hundred times during the day it saw the light, and detected in it almost a hundred defects. But, it was too late for a change. My next concern was, the probability that tricks would be played upon me. There was no way to guard against them, and I saw that I must run my chance. Twice a day, for three days, I went to the office of the paper in which the announcement of my matrimonial intentions had appeared, but not until the afternoon of the third day did I receive any response. The note that bore in superscription, the initials I had selected, was neatly penned, and set forth, in well selected language, the writer's desire to enter into a marriage contract with a man of good principles and suitable age and condition. She mentioned a place of interview; described the dress she would wear, and gave a name by which I was to address her, in order that there should be no mistake.

"I was on the spot to a minute, you may be sure. The time was sun down, and the place a beautiful cemetery near the city. Leaning, in a pensive attitude, upon the iron railing that enclosed an exquisitely designed monument, I saw a well dressed, well formed, but deeply veiled lady. Passing close to her, I said, 'Anna.' Instantly she turned toward me, and we both stood almost motionless. Then, the stranger slowly drew aside the veil, while my heart throbbed heavily with its burden of expectation. The face was very plain, and showed the lines of at least thirty-five or forty years. In a word, she was old and ugly. There was a pause of embarrassment, as we stood for a few moments, looking intently at each other.

"'Enough,' I at length said, in a respectful tone, for there was an expression in the woman's face that inspired an instant respect; but I, at the same time, bowed low, and, turning away, left the place of meeting, feeling severely disappointed.

"This had also proved a failure. No other answer

came to my advertisement. A few months elapsed, when I resolved to try the experiment again. It was my only hope. So, after great labor, I prepared another advertisement, couching it in different terms, and sending it to another paper. On the morning after its appearance, I found a billet at the printer's. The fair respondent said that she had read my announcement, and, from my description of the person I was desirous of drawing into a tender alliance, did not in the least doubt that she would suit me. She said that she was well educated, moved in good society, was of a calm, affectionate temper, with a good deal more to the like purpose. I thought, from all this, that I had found the right person at last; and, you may be sure, was at the appointed place of meeting within a second of the time.

"The lady was there, and with her veil down. The proper sign given, she drew the thick covering from her face. I started, and uttered an exclamation of surprise; while a flush stained the lady's face. Again I bowed low, and without uttering a word, turned away; as I did so, my ear caught a sigh, and I was touched with a feeling of regret for having twice disappointed the same individual. But, her age and her features were against her."

"The same lady, Jones?"

"The very same."

"Possible!"

"Well, after this I concluded to go to another city and try my luck there. Having began to advertise, and feeling that it was my only chance, I could but persevere, hoping for a good result in the end. To New York I made a pilgrimage, and there, in the columns of the Sun newspaper set forth an account of my wants and wishes. Two or three answers came, but they bore, to my eyes, strong internal evidence of being traps laid to catch me, and I did not, therefore, reply to them, or give the interviews that were proposed. At last, after many days had elapsed, I found, at the office, a neat, gilt edged perfumed note, written in delicate characters, and with great propriety and modesty. The writer expressed a desire to meet me, and said that I would find her, dressed in a certain way, walking upon the Battery at five o'clock on the next afternoon. She said, that having lost by death, some years before, her last relative, and desiring, for many reasons, to have a home and a friend, she had thought well of answering my advertisement. But, she would frankly state, that she was not disposed to marry, just for the sake of getting married; and would, therefore, say, that, while she left me perfectly free to decline an alliance if the proposed interview were not satisfactory, she would feel herself just as free to act in a similar manner.

"All that, I thought very well. To the Battery I wended my way at the time appointed. The note of my fair correspondent had been consulted I don't know how many times; and each time the impression in her favor became more decided. As to my being pleased with her, no doubt remained. The fear was, that I might not find favor in her eyes.

"Five o'clock came, and one of the great iron doors of the Battery swung open to admit your humble servant. Repressing my impatience, I walked as

leisurely as possible down one of the main avenues toward the particular spot where the lady was to be. A woman of medium stature, with form of faultless symmetry, dressed in exquisite taste, awaited me. I was quickly by her side, and, with palpitating heart, uttered, in a low voice, the name she had given me. She started as she turned toward me, but did not withdraw her veil. Then she moved on, and I walked by her side. It was some moments before I could get sufficient command over my voice to break the silence with which we were both oppressed.

"The purpose of this meeting," I at length said, "need not to be mentioned. You see me, fair stranger, and are, doubtless, impressed, already, favorably or unfavorably. Let me see your face, that I, likewise, may be no longer in suspense. If we are suited to each other, let it be known as quickly as possible."

"But the lady kept her hand tightly upon her veil.

"I fear that we are not suited," she replied, half sadly.

"Why so?" I asked, quickly. "Is my person disagreeable? Does my face present an index of character that is repulsive?"

"No," she replied, in a low, sweet, thrilling voice. "I am disappointed, I own; but my heart feels no repulsion; my mind perceives nothing in you that offends."

"Then why express a doubt?" I asked.

"I will not be agreeable to you," she replied.

"How do you know? What reason have you for assuming this?"

"The lady was silent.

"Let me see your face," I urged.

"It will disappoint you," she said. "I am not what we call beautiful."

"But true and permanent beauty is of the mind," I replied.

"All say that, but few are willing to take for a wife one as plain as I am, no matter what may be her virtues."

"Years and sorrow mar the most lovely countenance—age plucks the roses from the fairest face. But a lovely mind progresses even toward the spring time of eternal beauty."

"All that I know," she answered, "and such sentiments men gravely utter as truths. But, after all, they are won by a pretty face. I am not beautiful, sir, nor am I very young."

"What care I for youth or beauty," was my enthusiastic reply. "Give me, in a wife, one whose mind is matured by experience, well balanced by just principles, and softened by unselfish affections. Such a woman, if I can find her, will I take to my home and heart as a priceless treasure. Fear not to let me see your countenance. Your words and tones have filled my mind with approval, and my heart with tender sympathy."

"Slowly was the veil drawn aside. I looked eagerly, and a pale, anxious, and certainly not beautiful face, met my earnest gaze. A slight exclamation fell involuntarily from my lips; and I stepped a step backward. The veil fell, and a deep sigh was poured upon the air.

"The lady was turning away, as I laid my hand gently upon her arm, and said—

“‘It is enough! The matter is decreed. We are made for each other. I will not disregard coincidences so remarkable. Draw your hand within my own, and let us prolong this strange interview.’

“The lady did as I desired, and I felt her hand tremble as it was laid upon my arm.

“‘Now lift your veil, and let me see your face and grow familiar with it.’

“She drew aside the dark screen. It was the same face I had twice before met, but now it did not seem half so repulsive as at first; and, before we had circled the Battery twice, it had become, through the radiance of thought and affection, agreeable to my eyes. Enough to say, that we were married that night, and a true and good wife she has made me.”

“That’s rather a strange story, Jones,” said his friend. “‘The doctor’ tells one very much like it.”

“Doctor who?”

“‘The doctor.’”

“Well, I don’t care what doctor tells it, it happened just as I said.”

“Perhaps he got hold of your story.”

“Very likely,” said Jones. “In fact, it must be so, for I am very certain a thing like that couldn’t happen twice.”

“Oh, no, certainly not,” returned the friend with a shrug. “That would be stranger than the fact itself.”

MODEST MERIT.

BY MARY DAVENANT

"DEPEND upon it, my dear, merit, modest merit like yours will not always be overlooked, though it may be so at a ball," was the reply Mrs. Arlington made to a remark of her daughter's, a sweetly, pretty young girl, who with a languid, desponding air was gazing into the fire.

"What is that you are saying, aunt, about modest merit?" said a voice from the opposite end of the room, and a handsome, brilliant looking girl rose from the piano, at which she had been seated, and came forward repeating her question, "what was that you were saying about such an old fashioned article? and who is blessed with it besides my little cousin here, who has enough for a whole ball-room of belles?"

"I was merely comforting her for the want of pleasure she experienced last evening," replied Mrs. Arlington, "by telling her she will not always be so overlooked, and that her merit will sooner or later be acknowledged."

"Not while she is so very modest and shy, my dearest aunt; not all the merit of all the Howards would be appreciated in such a place as a ball-room, with such a superabundant stock of modesty as Ellen has. No, no, you must put your merit in a candlestick and elevate it, and not hide it under a bushel if you want it to shine there, and a little gilding added to it will do the merit no harm. Either gold or brass will do the business, the latter often answers as well or better than the former."

"You have great pleasure in talking in this way I know, Cecelia," said her aunt, "and, as a great belle, I suppose I ought not to controvert what you are saying, but I do not think you have much reason, from your own experience, to advocate such doctrines. Your merit has not been overlooked, and yet we all know it has not been elevated by yourself."

"That is true, aunt, that I have not elevated it myself; but then I have done what is pretty much the same thing in the way of success, I have not allowed myself to be put down; as observation if not experience has taught me, that once submit to that and you are a nobody."

"I never saw any one who wanted to, or at least had the hardihood to try to do so," replied Mrs. Arlington—"your claims, my dear Cecelia, are too well known and acknowledged to attempt treating you as they would my daughter, with no claims to either wealth or fashion."

"But at the same time of the same blood as myself," said Cecelia, stooping down and kissing her cousin, "and quite as pretty and a great deal better than I am, only overstocked with diffidence and a want of confidence in herself. I saw how uncomfortable she was last night; but no persuasions of mine could draw

her out of the corner she had ensconced herself in, and I had too much respect for her dignity to ask any of the beaux to be introduced to her."

"I should have died with mortification if you had done so, cousin," said Ellen, her face flushing with indignation. "I was very unhappy I won't deny while sitting, dance after dance, and seeing other girls no better looking, nor better dressed than myself, and that I knew were perfect dunces in their wits, with as many partners as they wanted. And I was angry with myself for being so vexed at it; and like Miss Bremer's poor Petrea Franks, I tried to philosophize upon the folly of the thing with about the same success. But I would rather have been sitting there until now than have had any one dance with me from charity, or have exposed myself to be remarked upon as those Miss Finches' are, one of whom I actually heard asking to be introduced to a gentleman, who, when the request was made to him, declined it with a shocking grimace, and left the ball-room immediately. Now was not that too bad to see one of your own sex do?"

"Shocking indeed," laughed Cecelia, "and aunt here looks as if she thought it a fabrication. But there is a wide difference, my dear little Nelly, between such brazen vulgarity as this, and the dignified, self-respecting composure of manner that I want to see in you. You could no more do as they do than you could be as awkward, ugly, square shouldered, and red-handed as they are. It is their nature to be vulgar to an extreme, and yours to be too refined and sensitive. I do not want you to be pushing, only do not be shrinking—you shake your head as if it were impossible to be otherwise, but I nod mine, and say it must be altered, and when I do so, 'not Jove's nod of old that shook the spears,' as Mrs. Malaprop would say, has more decision in it."

"That I know from past experience," said her aunt, smiling; "I shall never forget the scene in your old uncle's room, Cecelia, when he pushed over that little meek cousin of yours, who was so patiently and softly rubbing his gouty feet, because you had beaten him at chess; and you insisting upon it he should ask her pardon, when the poor, timid little thing had gathered herself up from the corner where she had rolled, without a word of complaint. Every one was frightened at your boldness; but to their astonishment he did it, though evidently very much provoked. Your decision there certainly gained its end."

"And is a case in point for my argument about modest merit. You know that old uncle, whom every one was afraid to contradict or oppose in any way, who was always to be conqueror in every thing from a game of chess upward; would bear

contradiction quietly from me because I would not submit to his unreasonable whims; and that very scene that all thought would cost me my fortune, doubled it, as the date of the codicil showed, by which he left me so much more than the others; and poor Sally who got the kick, and has been his patient slave for more than a year, was rewarded with but a small legacy. And now look at her and at me—with forty times my merit, greatly more beautiful and accomplished, and I do not know how with many more bushels full of that inward worth that passeth show—look at her, she is working her life out in her country parsonage, shut out from all society but that of her young ones and her clergyman husband; his merit overlooked as well as hers, a mere domestic drudge. While I am sought after and made much of—because I make much of myself.”

“Too true,” replied Mrs. Arlington, “though I believe your cousin is very happy in her way. Not as happy as you are, for she has not the same buoyant temperament that makes sunshine for yourself and all around you. Her tastes are different—more like my Ellen’s here.”

“Pardon me, aunt—Ellen is not like Sally in her disposition in any way, but in being very diffident and not thinking enough of herself, two traits that have been fostered by her own dear mother’s mistaken notions on female education. As you see, Ellen was mortified at not being attended to last night, ergo, she would like to be a belle, which Sally never would—then she would rather die than have a beau dance from charity with her—while Sally would have thought only of his kindness and not of her own dignity. No—Ellen is of firmer stuff, and when I have her at home with me, see if I do not bring all her shining qualities to light, and make a great belle of her.”

“Add to that,” said her aunt, “making a match for her with some dashing beau, and I shall say the age of miracles has not passed, for one is as feasible as the other. I am not afraid, however, of trusting her with you, Cecelia, for all you have such a wild way of talking—you always contrived to bewitch people into letting you have your own will from your old uncle downward. I only wonder you have not long ago been tormented into marrying some one of your galaxy of beaux, for if I were a man I would never rest until I had tormented you into having me.”

“Thank you, my dear, complimentary aunt,” said Cecelia; “and now I must go and dress for a walk with one of my galaxy, as you call those bachelor butterflies that profess to find me so charming, and after all I dare say they think with the old song—

“Tis not her sense, for sure in that
There’s nothing more than common;
And all her wit is only chat
Like any other woman.”

I humbly put some of their devotion down to the score of my being a fortune, but the most of it I owe to my own assumption of superiority, which it amuses me to play off upon them. I am very sad, ain’t I, aunt?—but there is my gentleman in waiting, and I must go.”

Well might Mrs. Arlington say that her niece was

a bewitching creature. Cecelia was one of those favored individuals upon whom fortune seemed to have lavished all her gifts—a beauty both in form and face, with eyes that sparkled with intelligence, and a conversation at once piquant and sensible. She was a charm in everything she said or did. Whether in a gay and sportive mood she flung the bright sparkles of her wit around her—or whether in a more sober strain she talked with the grave and sedate, it was all done with such grace that young and old alike owned the fascination, and felt the influence. An orphan from her earliest youth, she had never known the loneliness of an orphan’s lot, as a mother’s love had been supplied by an aunt, who, childless herself, doted on Cecelia with an intensity of love that knew no bounds, and that was fully repaid by her niece in return; that she was not spoiled, utterly ruined by the indulgence she met with, was owing to her having a fund of good sense that nothing could warp, and a temper of uncommon sweetness. At the time we introduce her to our readers she had been on a visit to some of her Southern relations, and, on her way to her home, had stayed some time in Philadelphia, with her aunt, Mrs. Arlington, where as usual her career of belleship had been a brilliant one; and presented a marked contrast to that of her cousin Ellen, who though a beautiful girl, was, from want of confidence in herself, constantly pushed into the back-ground by those far her inferiors in every qualification of mind and manners, and was fast acquiring the horrid name of a *forlornity*, when her more fortunate cousin came to her rescue.

“Ellen,” said Cecelia to her, on her return from the walk we left her preparing for, “I have been thinking about you all this morning, even while my handsome beau, Dr. Guest, thought I was listening to his brilliant nothings with the deepest attention.”

“Ah, Cecelia,” said Ellen, “I think the doctor’s brilliant nothings, as you call them, all have a meaning in them, when addressed to you, backed as they are by those insinuating looks he so often gives with them.”

“My innocent little cousin,” said Cecelia, laughing heartily, “do you think I am to be deceived by the chaff this general flirt offers up as incense to each new divinity? Do you not see him making the same speeches, giving the same looks to one girl after the other, if they chance to be the fashion? No, no, I am not to be satisfied with the *debris* of a heart of ten years flirtation. If he does mean to be in earnest now, he must take the consequences of his previous bad style of manners. But enough of him, and now let me tell you what I mean to do with you.”

“That is a very cool way of talking about me, Cecelia,” said Ellen, brightly; “I am a mere machine I see in your estimation—so let me know what is to be done to and with me.”

“In the first place, you know I presume that your mother has promised that I shall take you home with me, and once there I mean you to be guided by my motives. I shall play Lady Paramount over you, which here I cannot do, as my dear, good aunt, with her old fashioned, over sensitive feelings of modesty, delicacy, etc., is always pulling down in you what I

build up. I shall make a belle of you—see if I do not."

"Thank you," said Ellen, curtsying with mock gravity, "you can work miracles then!"

"You may laugh," said Cecelia, "but I will do it, and as I am going home in a week, you had better begin to make ready."

Helen was not at all sorry to acquiesce in her mother's decision, that she should accompany her cousin to Boston. She had never been from home, and she anticipated with girlish delight the new scenes of pleasure that awaited there. Further than this she did not look, except to laugh heartily at Cecelia's plans for making her a belle, and turning the grub she persisted in thinking herself into the butterfly her cousin wished to make of her. Before they left home, however, Ellen proved that if she was diffident, she was not wanting in penetration in some matters, for to Cecelia's great chagrin, and Ellen's infinite delight, Dr. Guest, the hitherto invincible flirt, proposed to Cecelia in good set terms, and to his deep mortification, consternation, astonishment and horror was refused—the young lady giving as her reasons for so doing, that from his well known flirting character she had not supposed him for an instant to be serious in his attentions to her, and had, therefore, never given him a thought as a lover. A bitter truth which the gentleman had to ponder on, and which it is hoped made him a wiser if not a sadder man in his next wooing.

We must now follow our young friends to Boston and see how the modest merit of the one, and the acknowledged merit of the other sped. So Cecelia coming as she did to her own home, after several months absence, all was delightful, as troops of friends and admirers were there to welcome her back again, and to complain of her long stay. To Ellen it was also delightful, for strengthened by Cecelia's example, and most anxious to please and gratify her, she exerted herself to the utmost to shake off her natural diffidence, and was consequently able to appear as she was, a lively, intelligent and agreeable girl. As a stranger she was talked of and commented on, and sharing all the advantages of the wealth, luxury and popularity of her cousin, she became at once the fashion, and was pronounced very lovely. Fashion! that omnipotent goddess, whose fiats and taste are so capricious, and yet before whom most mortals bow in lowly submission, and wanting whose sanction, as Miss Edgeworth says in *Patronage*, "not even Venus with her Cestus would be pronounced lovely." Our little Ellen then was the fashion, and was very much caressed. Her modest and retiring manners were pronounced the most charming in the world—so lady-like—her diffidence was dignity—her accomplishments were great but hidden, so said those favored few before whom she had ventured (consented they called it) to sing, and who boasted of the honor to those who had not been so fortunate. And her small hands and feet, which at home few knew she possessed, or thought them worth speaking of if they did, were here celebrated for their beauty, and extolled as miracles of beauty and grace.

Cecelia was in ecstasies at her cousin's success, and at her own share in producing it. No young lady dislikes being admired and making conquests, no matter how well stored and well balanced her mind may be, and to love and to be loved is one of her privileges and happinesses. This too was added to Ellen's triumphs.

But before we go further with our story, we must take a peep at Cecelia's heart and see how all went on there. Ellen had long suspected that one of the most attentive and devoted of her beaux, and who was one of the most agreeable and intelligent among them, was in reality devoted to her cousin, and that Cecelia in her heart of hearts preferred him to every other. She had noticed that under all her gaiety of manner, and with all her apparent lightness of heart, she concealed some trouble that she was either too proud or too sensitive to allow to be seen; and she strongly suspected that a preference for this gentleman was the cause. She determined to watch them well when together to be sure of his sentiments, and then to try and win her cousin's confidence, and be a comfort to her. That Mr. Marsdale cared nothing for herself she was sure, as he was ever introducing the most agreeable men to her, and those most dangerous as rivals, which was not at all like a lover; and seemed to take the greatest interest in the courtship of his own most particular friend, who was now Ellen's devoted. She was not long doubtful as to the sentiments Mr. Marsdale entertained for her cousin, and after many tears from Cecelia she found her suspicions were right, and that she did like one who was every way worthy of her, but who was poor in this world's goods, "and whose modest opinion of his own merit like yours, dear Ellen," said Cecelia, "he allows to stand between his happiness and mine. He thinks I am too good for him, and that it would not be high-minded and honorable in him, who has what the world calls nothing, to offer to one who happens to have plenty of this world's gear. Meantime he could not help letting me see he loved me, and I cannot help loving him, and so we stand—he will not offer to me from principle, and I must pretend not to care for him from pride; and his too humble opinion of his own merits will wreck the happiness of both."

"Do not say so, dear Cecelia," replied Ellen: "you say his opinion of himself like mine is too humble, and yet see how that same quality you so deplore my possessing, has been my greatest gain—for Mr. Seymour told me yesterday when he made me so very, very happy, by begging for that love which was already his, that one of my greatest charms in his eyes was that modest merit which had to be sought out and discovered before it can be known, and which you always laughed at as the greatest bar to my success in life. Mr. Marsdale is not half as much wanting in anything that makes him unequal to you as I am to Mr. Seymour; and I am sure with a little more encouragement on your part than you now give him, he will be unable to keep silence much longer, for any one may see how desperately he is in love with you."

That evening a small but gay party had assembled in Cecelia's drawing-rooms. Ellen, gayer and

happier than she ever thought it possible her lot on earth could make her, was conversing with her lover, or rather listening to his raptures, and to the surprise of many the exclusive, dignified, fastidious and extremely wealthy Mr. Seymour seemed to be transformed under the influence of his love into a most amusing and gay companion, and to be full of mirth and spirits. He had with mock solemnity been telling the fortune of all the company at cards, and as they accused him of cheating at that, he turned to Cecelia and begged her to try her fate by the fanciful and classical method of the *sortes vergillianæ*. A happy thought darted into Ellen's brain as he proposed this, and taking from the table a small volume, she eagerly exclaimed—

"Oh, do, Cecelia, and here is the very book for the purpose—the beauties of Shakspeare."

With these words she placed the volume in her cousin's hands. Cecelia took it, but said with a gay laugh—

"I am too superstitious to try my fate myself, and, therefore, depute you to do it for me, Mr. Seymour."

As she spoke, she gave him a sprig of jessamine with which to part the leaves of the book: and it was finally decided that all who felt nervous on the subject should have the same privilege and appoint a proxy.

This was agreed to, and Mr. Seymour proceeded to divide the leaves for Cecelia's fate with the stalk of the jessamine sprig. The book opened with the point of the divider on the passage, "she never told her love, but let concealment like a worm in the bud feed on her damask cheek." A gay laugh followed this quotation, as the most absurd of fates to give to the bright young lady of the mansion. But a single glance from Cecelia spoke volumes to her cousin. Again and again with various success was the magic volume tried, and great was the mirth that it produced—at last when Ellen had tried hers, and all sorts of devotion from her lover had been improvised by Mr. Seymour for her fate, the book was passed to Marsdale, who immediately handed it to Cecelia, begging her with a look of great and intense feeling for once to be his fate. Helen stood by her side, and declaring that in such a momentous affair two wise heads must be better than one, slipped the jessamine stalk in a place she had previously marked, and then leaving the book to be given back by her cousin, she turned away. One glance Cecelia cast on it, and then with a burning blush she handed it to her lover, who read as follows—

"Hope is a lover's staff, walk hence with that
And manage it against despairing thoughts."

As he finished it their eyes met for an instant, and then the lady turned hers on the ground.

This was the last fate to be tried, and immediately after the company departed—all but one. Need it be said who it was? It was one who had entered the house a most despairing, self-tormenting lover, but who seizing the hope presented to him to manage it against "despairing thoughts," that he left it an exulting, happy, successful one—blessing Shakspeare and all fate—trying fooleries, and all but worshipping the ready witted woman who had helped him to his happiness. Had not our Ellen profited by her sojourn with strangers?

She returned home greatly improved in beauty and manners, and radiant with happiness—and not long afterward Cecelia as a bride made her aunt another visit, not to carry off Ellen, but to see her carried off by a worshipping, devoted husband. The day after the wedding, as Mrs. Arlington was expressing her thankfulness at Ellen's brilliant prospects of happiness, Cecelia laughingly reminded her aunt of their conversation the preceding winter, on the day after Ellen's unhappy fall.

"Do you remember your reply to me when I said I would make Ellen a belle?"

"Yes," said her aunt, "I do, and I acknowledge you have worked a miracle in my eyes. But you must acknowledge, Cecelia, that I was right in my opinion, that modest merit would sooner or later be recognized. Hers has been so, and so has that of your husband, which you tell me was so near interfering in your happiness."

"No, I acknowledge no such thing, aunt," said Cecelia, laughing—"it was Mr. Seymour's modest impudence that would not be denied that gained him Ellen, and it was my modest assurance that overcame Marsdale's diffidence, was it not, Edward?" turning to her husband, who had just then entered the room.

"Ah!" said Edward, "I should have gone to Mexico I do believe, and thrown away my wretched life if the blessed angel of hope had not come to my rescue just then."

"But I had to hold out my anchor pretty conspicuously before you condescended to see it," said Cecelia. "So, aunt, I still hold to my opinion that it is the assuming ones that have the best of it in the world, and the modest ones are pushed in the back-ground."

"And I to mine," said Mrs. Arlington, "that modest merit will be rewarded—only it must be patient and wait."